

WORKERS OF ALL COUNTRIES, UNITE!

V. I. LENIN

ONE STEP FORWARD,
TWO STEPS BACK

THE CRISIS IN OUR PARTY!



FOREIGN LANGUAGES PUBLISHING HOUSE
M o s c o w 1 9 5 1

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This translation of V I Lenin's *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* has been made from the text given in the *Collected Works of V I Lenin*, Vol 7, Fourth Russian Edition, prepared by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute (Gospolitizdat, Moscow 1916)

CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
PREFACE	7
A THE PREPARATION FOR THE CONGRESS	13
B SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VARIOUS GROUPINGS AT THE CONGRESS	17
C BEGINNING OF THE CONGRESS THE OR- GANIZATION COMMITTEE INCIDENT	24
D DISSOLUTION OF THE YUZHNY RABOCHY GROUP	39
E THE EQUALITY OF LANGUAGES INCIDENT	45
F THE AGRARIAN PROGRAM	58
G THE PARTY RULES COMRADE MARTOV'S DRAFT	72
H DISCUSSION ON CENTRALISM <i>PRIOR</i> TO THE SPLIT AMONG THE ISKRA-ISTS	87
I PARAGRAPH ONE OF THE RULES	93
J INNOCENT SUFFERERS FROM A FALSE ACCU- SATION OF OPPORTUNISM	131
K CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE RULES COMPOSITION OF THE COUN- CIL	149

	<i>Page</i>
L CONCLUSION OF THE DEBATE ON THE RULES CO-OPTION ON THE CENTRAL BODIES WITHDRAWAL OF THE <i>RABOCHEYE</i> <i>DYLO</i> DELEGATES	159
M THE ELECTIONS END OF THE CONGRESS	182
N GENERAL PICTURE OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS THE REVOLUTIONARY AND OPPORTUNIST WINGS OF THE PARTY	227
O AFTER THE CONGRESS TWO METHODS OF STRUGGLE	249
P LITTLE ANNOYANCES SHOULD NOT BE AL- LOWED TO MAR A BIG PLEASURE	281
Q THE NEW <i>ISKRA</i> OPPORTUNISM IN QUES- TIONS OF ORGANIZATION	300
R A FEW WORDS ON DIALECTICS TWO REVO- LUTIONS	351
<i>APPENDIX</i>	
THE INCIDENT OF COMRADE GUSEV AND COMRADE DEUTSCH	361
NOTES	377

PREFACE

After some time in the course of a prolonged, stubborn and heated struggle, there usually begins to emerge the central and fundamental points at issue, upon the decision of which the ultimate outcome of the campaign depends, and in comparison with which all and sundry minor and petty episodes of the struggle recede more and more into the background

That is how matters stand in the struggle within our Party, which for six months already has been riveting the attention of all members of the Party. And precisely because in the outline of the whole struggle herein presented to the reader I have had to allude to many points of detail of infinitesimal interest, and to many squabbles which, in fact, are of no interest whatever, I should like from the very outset to draw the reader's attention to two really central and fundamental points of tremendous interest, of undoubted historical significance, and which are the most urgent political questions confronting our Party today

The first question is that of the political significance of the division of our Party into a "majority" and a "minority" that took shape at the Second Party Congress and pushed all previous divisions among Russian Social-Democrats far into the background

The second question is that of the significance in principle of the position taken up by the new *Iskra*² on organizational questions, in so far as this position is really based on principle

The first question concerns the starting point of the struggle in our Party, its source, its causes, and its fundamental political character. The second question concerns the ultimate outcome of the struggle, its finale, the total of principles that results from the addition of all that pertains to the realm of principle and the subtraction of all that pertains to the realm of squabbling. The answer to the first question is obtained by analyzing the struggle at the Party Congress, the answer to the second, by analyzing what is new in the principles of the new *Iskra*. Both these analyses, which constitute nine-tenths of my pamphlet, lead to the conclusion that the "majority" is the revolutionary, and the "minority" the opportunist wing of our Party, the disagreements that divide the two wings at the present moment for the most part concern not questions of program or tactics but only organizational questions, the new system of views that emerges the more clear-

ly from the columns of the new *Iskra* the more it tries to lend profundity to its position and the more that position becomes cleared of all the committed squabbles about co-option—is opportunism in matters of organization.

The principal shortcoming of the existing literature on the crisis in our Party is, as far as the study and elucidation of facts are concerned, the almost complete absence of an analysis of the minutes of the Party Congress, and as far as the elucidation of fundamental principles of the organizational question is concerned, the absence of an analysis of the connection which unquestionably exists between the basic error Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod committed in their formulation of the first paragraph of the Rules and their defence of that formulation, on the one hand, and the whole "system" (in so far as one can speak of a system here) of the present principles of the *Iskra* on the question of organization, on the other. Apparently, the present editors of the *Iskra* do not even notice this connection, although the importance of the dispute over paragraph one has been referred to again and again in the literature of the "majority." As a matter of fact, Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov are now only deepening, developing and expanding their initial error with regard to paragraph one. As a matter of fact, the entire position of the opportunists on organiza-

tional questions already began to be revealed in the controversy over paragraph one their advocacy of a diffuse, not strongly welded, Party organization, their hostility to the idea (the "bureaucratic" idea) of building the Party from the top downwards, starting from the Party Congress and the bodies set up by it, their tendency to proceed from the bottom upwards, which would allow every professor, every high-school student and "every striker" to declare himself a member of the Party, their hostility to the "formalism" which demands that a Party member should belong to an organization recognized by the Party, their inclination towards the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who is only prepared "platonically to recognize organizational relations", their penchant for opportunist profundity and for anarchist phrases, their tendency towards autonomy as against centralism—in a word, all that is now blossoming so luxuriantly in the new *Iskra*, and is more and more facilitating the complete and graphic elucidation of the initial error.

As for the minutes of the Party Congress, the truly undeserved neglect of them can only be explained by the fact that our controversies have been cluttered by squabbles, and possibly by the fact that these minutes contain too large an amount of too bitter truth. The minutes of the Party Congress present a picture of the actual state of

affairs in our Party that is unique and irreplaceable for its accuracy, completeness, comprehensiveness, richness and authenticity; a picture of views, sentiments and plans drawn by the participants in the movement themselves; a picture of the political shades existing in the Party, showing their relative strength, their mutual relations and their struggles. It is the minutes of the Party Congress, and only these minutes, that show us to what extent we have really succeeded in making a clean sweep of all the survivals of the old, narrow, circle ties and in substituting for them a single great Party tie. It is the duty of every Party member who wishes to take an intelligent part in the affairs of his Party to make a careful study of our Party Congress. I say study advisedly, for, merely to read the mass of raw material contained in the minutes is not enough to obtain a picture of the Congress. Only by careful and independent study can (and must) one reach a stage where the brief digest of the speeches, the dry excerpts from the debates, the petty skirmishes over minor (seemingly minor) issues will combine to form one whole, and enable the Party member to conjure up before his eyes the living figure of each prominent speaker and to obtain a full idea of the political complexion of each group of delegates to the Party Congress. If the writer of these lines only succeeds in stimulating the reader to make a broad

and independent study of the minutes of the Party Congress, he will not regard his work as having been done in vain

One more word to the opponents of Social-Democracy They gloat and grimace over our controversies; and, of course, they will try to pick isolated passages from my pamphlet, which deals with the defects and shortcomings of our Party, and to use them for their own ends The Russian Social-Democrats are already steeled enough in battle not to be perturbed by these pinpricks and to continue, in spite of them, their work of self-criticism and ruthless exposure of their own shortcomings, which will unquestionably and inevitably be overcome as the working-class movement grows. As for those gentlemen, our opponents, let them try to give us a picture of the *true* state of affairs in their own "parties" even remotely approximating that given by the minutes of our Second Congress!

N. Lenin

May 1904

A THE PREPARATION FOR THE CONGRESS

There is a saying that everyone is entitled to curse his judges for twenty-four hours. Our Party Congress, like every congress of every party, was also the judge of certain persons who laid claim to the post of leaders but who met with discomfiture. Today these representatives of the "minority" are, with a naïveté verging on the pathetic, "cursing their judges" and doing their best to discredit the Congress, to belittle its importance and authority. This striving has been expressed most vividly, perhaps, in an article in the *Iskra*, No 57, by "Practical Worker," who feels outraged at the idea of the Congress being a sovereign "divinity." This is so characteristic a trait of the new *Iskra* that it cannot be passed over in silence. The editors, most of whom were *rejected* by the Congress, continue, on the one hand, to call themselves a "Party" editorial board, while, on the other, they accept with open arms people who assert that the Congress was not divine. Nice

of them, is it not? It is true, of course, gentlemen, that the Congress was not divine; but what must we think of those who begin to "blackguard" the Congress *after* they have suffered defeat at it?

Let us, indeed, recall the main facts in the history of the preparations for the Congress

The *Iskra*⁴ declared at the very outset, in its announcement of publication in 1900, that before we could unite we must draw lines of demarcation. The *Iskra* tried to convert the Conference of 1902⁵ into a private meeting and not a Party Congress.* The *Iskra* acted with extreme caution in the summer and autumn of 1902 when it revived the Organization Committee that had been elected at the conference. At last the work of demarcation was finished—as we all generally admitted. The Organization Committee was constituted at the very end of 1902. The *Iskra* welcomed its firm establishment and in an *editorial* article in its issue No. 32 declared that the convocation of a Party Congress was a *most urgent* and pressing necessity. Thus, the last thing we can be accused of is having been hasty in convening the Second Congress. In fact, we were guided by the maxim: measure your cloth seven times before cutting it, we had every moral right to assume that after the cloth had been cut our comrades

* See *Minutes of the Second Congress*, p. 20

would not start complaining and measuring it all over again

The Organization Committee drew up very punctilious (formalistic and bureaucratic, those would say who are now using these words to conceal their political spinelessness) rules for the Second Congress, got them passed by all the committees and finally endorsed them, stipulating in §18 that "all decisions of the Congress and all the elections it carries out are Party decisions and binding on all Party organizations. They cannot be challenged by anyone on any pretext whatever and can be rescinded or amended only by the next Party Congress."~ How innocent by themselves are these words, that were adopted at the time without a murmur, as something self-evident, and how strange they sound today—like a verdict against the "minority"! Is that not so? Why was this paragraph drawn up? Merely as a formality? Of course not. This decision seemed to be necessary, and was indeed necessary, because the Party consisted of a number of isolated and independent groups which might have refused to recognize the Congress. This decision in fact expressed the *free will* of all the revolutionaries (which is now being talked about so much, and so irrelevantly, the term "free" being euphemisti-

* See *Minutes of the Second Congress*, pp 22-23 and 380

cally applied to what really deserves the epithet "capricious") It was equivalent to the *word of honour* mutually pledged by all the Russian Social-Democrats It was intended as a guarantee that the vast amount of labour, danger and expense incurred by the Congress would not be in vain, that the Congress would not be turned into a farce. It qualified in advance refusal to recognize the decisions of and *elections* at the Congress as a *breach of faith*.

Who is it, then, that the new *Iskra* is scoffing at when it makes the new discovery that the Congress was not divine and its decisions not sacred? Does this discovery imply "new views on organization," or only new attempts to cover up old tracks?

B. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE VARIOUS GROUPINGS AT THE CONGRESS

Thus the Congress was called after the most careful preparation and on the basis of the fullest representation. The general recognition that the composition of the Congress was correct and that its decisions were *absolutely* binding also found expression in the statement of the chairman (*Minutes*, p. 54) after the Congress had been constituted.

What was the principal task of the Congress? To create a *real* party on that basis of principles and organization which had been advanced and elaborated by the *Iskra*. That this was the direction in which the Congress had to work was predetermined by the activities of the *Iskra* over a period of three years and by the fact of its recognition by the majority of the Committees. The *Iskra's* program and trend were to become the program and trend of the Party, the *Iskra's* organizational plans were to be embodied in the rules of organization of the Party. But it goes without saying

that this result could not be achieved without a struggle the highly representative character of the Congress ensured the presence of organizations which had vigorously fought the *Iskra* (the Bund⁶ and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*⁷) and of such which, while verbally recognizing the *Iskra* as the leading organ, actually pursued plans of their own and were unstable in matters of principle (the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group and delegates from several of the committees who were associated with it). Under these circumstances, the Congress could not avoid becoming *the arena of a struggle for the victory of the "Iskra" trend*. That the Congress did become such an arena will at once be apparent to all who peruse its minutes with any amount of attention. Our task now is to trace in detail the principal groupings that were revealed on the various issues at the Congress and to reconstruct on the basis of the precise data of the minutes, the political complexion of each of the main groups. What precisely were these groups, trends and shades which, at the Congress, were to unite under the guidance of the *Iskra* in a single Party?—that is what we must show by analyzing the debates and the voting. The elucidation of this point is of cardinal importance both for a study of what our Social-Democrats really stand for and for an understanding of the causes of the differences among them. That is precisely why, in my speech at the League⁸ Con-

gress and in my letter to the editorial board of the new *Iskra*, I put an analysis of the various groupings in the forefront. My opponents, the representatives of the "minority" (headed by Martov) utterly failed to grasp the substance of the question. At the Congress of the League they confined themselves to amendments to particulars in the endeavour to "vindicate" themselves of the charge levelled against them of having swung over to opportunism, but did not even attempt to counter my picture of the groupings at the Congress by drawing one *in any way different*. Now, Martov attempts in the *Iskra* (No. 56) to represent every endeavour precisely to delimit the various political groups at the Congress as mere "circle politics." Strong language, Comrade Martov! But the strong language of the new *Iskra* has a peculiar quality: one has only to reproduce all the stages of the divergence, from the Congress onwards, for all this strong language to turn *completely and primarily* against the present editorial board. Look at yourselves, gentlemen, so-called Party editors, who talk about circle politics!

Martov now finds the facts about our struggle at the Congress so unpleasant that he tries to obscure them altogether. "An *Iskra*-ist," he says, "is one who, at the Party Congress and prior to it, expressed his complete solidarity with the *Iskra*, advocated its program and its views on

organization and supported its organizational policy. There were over forty *Iskra*-ists of this kind at the Congress—such was the number of votes cast for the *Iskra*'s program and for the resolution adopting the *Iskra* as the Central Organ of the Party." Open the *Minutes* of the Congress, and you will find that the program was adopted by *all* (p. 233) except Akimov, who abstained. Thus, Comrade Martov wants to assure us that the Bundists, Brouckère and Martynov *demonstrated* their "complete solidarity" with the *Iskra* and *advocated* its views on organization! This is ridiculous. The conversion, *after* the Congress, of *all* who had attended it into equal members of the Party (and not even all, for the Bundists had withdrawn) is here confused with the grouping that called forth the struggle *at* the Congress. Instead of a study of the *elements* that went to make up the "majority" and the "minority" after the Congress, we get the official phrase, "recognized the program"!

Take the voting on the adoption of the *Iskra* as the Central Organ. You will see that it was Martynov—whom Comrade Martov, with a courage worthy of a better cause, now credits with having supported the *Iskra*'s organizational views and organizational policy—who insisted on separating the two parts of the resolution, the bare adoption of the *Iskra* as the Central Organ, and the recognition of its services. When the first

part of the resolution (recognizing the services of the *Iskra* and expressing *solidarity* with it) was put to the vote *only thirty-five votes* were cast in favour, two votes were cast against it (Akimov and Brouckère) and eleven abstained (Martynov, the five Bundists and the five votes of the editorial board the two votes each of Martov and myself and Plekhanov's one). Consequently, the anti-*Iskra* group (five Bundists and three *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists) becomes definitely revealed also in this instance, one most advantageous to Martov's present views and chosen by himself. Take the voting on the second part of the resolution on the adoption of the *Iskra* as the Central Organ without giving any reasons and without any expression of solidarity (*Minutes*, p. 147) forty-four votes *in favour*, which present-day Martov ascribes to the *Iskra*-ists. The total number of votes to be cast was fifty-one; subtracting the five votes of the editors, who abstained, we get forty-six, two voted *against* (Akimov and Brouckère), consequently, the remaining forty-four include *all five Bundists*. And so, the Bundists at the Congress "expressed complete solidarity with the *Iskra*"—this is how official history is written by the official *Iskra*! Running ahead somewhat, we will explain to the reader the real reasons for this official truth: the present editorial board of the *Iskra* could and would have been a real Party editorial board (and not a quasi-

Party editorial board, as it is today) *if the Bund-ists and the "Rabocheye Dyelo"-ists had not withdrawn from the Congress*, that is why these most trusty guardians of the present so-called Party editorial board had to be proclaimed *Iskra-ists*. But I shall speak of this in greater detail later.

The next question is if the Congress was a struggle between the *Iskra-ist* and the anti-*Iskra-ist* elements, were there no intermediate, unstable elements who vacillated between the two? Anyone at all familiar with our Party and with the usual complexion of all congresses would be inclined a priori to answer the question in the affirmative. Comrade Martov is now very reluctant to recall these unstable elements, so he represents the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group and the delegates who gravitated towards it as typical *Iskra-ists*, and our differences with them as paltry and unimportant. Fortunately, we now have before us the complete text of the minutes and we are able to answer the question—a question of fact, of course—on the basis of documentary evidence. What we said above about the general grouping at the Congress does not, of course, claim to answer the question, but only to formulate it correctly.

Without an analysis of the political groupings, without having a picture of the Congress as a struggle between definite shades, our differences cannot be understood at all. Martov's attempt to

gloss over the different shades by ranking even the Bundists with the *Iskra*-ists is merely an evasion of the question. Even a priori, on the basis of the history of the Russian Social-Democratic movement before the Congress, three main groups are to be noted (for subsequent verification and detailed study)· the *Iskra*-ists, the anti-*Iskra*-ists, and the unstable, vacillating, wavering elements.

C. BEGINNING OF THE CONGRESS. THE ORGANIZATION COMMITTEE INCIDENT

It will be most convenient of all to analyze the debates and the voting in the order of the sittings of the Congress, so as consecutively to note the political shades as they became more and more apparent. Only when it is absolutely necessary will departures be made from the chronological order for the purpose of considering closely allied questions or similar groupings. For the sake of impartiality, we shall endeavour to mention *all* the more important votes, omitting, of course, the innumerable votes on minor issues which took up an inordinate amount of time at our Congress (partly owing to our inexperience and to our inefficiency in dividing the material between the commissions and the plenary sittings, and partly owing to quibbling which bordered on obstruction).

The first question to evoke a debate which began to reveal differences of shades was wheth-

er first place should be given (on the "agenda" of the Congress) to the item: "Position of the Bund in the Party" (*Minutes*, pp. 29-33). From the standpoint of the *Iskra*-ists, which was advocated by Plekhanov, Martov, Trotsky and myself, there could be no doubt on this point. The Bund's withdrawal from the Party offers striking confirmation of our views if the Bund refused to go our way and to accept the principles of organization which the majority of the Party shared with the *Iskra*, it would be useless and senseless to "pretend" that we were going the same way and only drag out the Congress (as the Bundists did drag it out). The question had already been made abundantly clear in the literature on the subject, and it was apparent to every Party member who thought at all that the only thing that remained was to put the question frankly, and bluntly and honestly make the choice autonomy (in which case we go the same way), or federation (in which case our ways part).

Always evasive in their entire policy, the Bundists wished to be evasive here too and to procrastinate. They were joined by Comrade Akimov, who, evidently on behalf of all the followers of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, at once brought up the differences with the *Iskra* over questions of organization (*Minutes*, p. 31). The Bund and the *Rabocheye Dyelo* were supported by Comrade Makhov (representing two votes of the Nikolayev

Committee—which shortly before this had expressed its solidarity with the *Iskra*!) The question was altogether unclear to Comrade Makhov, and another “sore spot” in his opinion was the question “whether we needed a democratic system or, on the contrary” (mark this!), “centralism”—exactly like the majority of our present “Party” editorial board who at the Congress had not yet noticed this “sore spot”!

Thus the *Iskra*-ists were opposed by the Bund, the *Rabocheye Dyelo* and Comrade Makhov, who together controlled the ten votes which were cast against us (p 33) *Thirty votes* were cast *in favour*—this is the figure, as we shall see later, around which the vote of the *Iskra*-ists often fluctuated. Eleven abstained, apparently not taking the side of either of the contending “parties.” It is interesting to note that when we took the vote on §2 of the Rules of the Bund (it was the rejection of this §2 which induced the Bund to withdraw from the Party), the votes in favour and the abstentions also amounted to ten (*Minutes*, p 289), and it was the three *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists (Brouckère, Martynov and Akimov) and Comrade Makhov who abstained. Clearly, the grouping shown in the vote on *the place* of the Bund item on the agenda was *not fortuitous*. Clearly, all these comrades differed with the *Iskra* not only on the technical question of the order of discussion, but *in essence as well*. In the

case of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, this difference in essence is clear to everyone, and as for Comrade Makhov, he gave an inimitable description of his attitude in the speech he delivered on the withdrawal of the Bund (*Minutes*, pp 289-90) It is worth while dwelling on this speech Comrade Makhov said that after the resolution rejecting federation, "the position of the Bund in the R S D L P ceased to be for me a question of principle and became a question of real politics, in relation to an historically-evolved national organization." "Here," the speaker continued, "I could not but take into account all the consequences that might follow from our vote, and would therefore have voted for §2 in its entirety." Comrade Makhov has excellently imbibed the spirit of "real politics" in principle he had *already* rejected federation, and *therefore* in practice *he would have voted* for including a point in the Rules establishing federation! And this "practical" comrade explains his profound position of principle in the following words: "But" (Shchedrin's famous "but") "since my voting one way or another would have been only a matter of principle" (1) "and could not have been of any practical importance, in view of the almost unanimous vote of all the other Congress delegates, I preferred to abstain from voting in order to bring out in principle" (God preserve us from such principles!) "the difference between my position on

this question and the position advocated by the Bund delegates, who voted for this point. Contrariwise, I would have voted for this point if the Bund delegates had abstained from voting on it, as they had at first insisted." Who can make head or tail of this? A man of principle abstains from loudly saying, "Yes," because practically it is useless when everybody else says, "No."

After the vote on the place of the Bund item on the agenda, the question of the *Borba* group cropped up at the Congress, it too led to an extremely interesting grouping and was closely bound up with "the sorest" point before the Congress, namely, the personal composition of the central bodies. The commission appointed to determine the composition of the Congress had pronounced against inviting the *Borba* group, in accordance with a *twice-adopted* decision of the Organization Committee (see *Minutes*, pp 333 and 375) and the report of *its representatives on the commission* (p 35).

Comrade Egorov, *a member of the Organization Committee*, declared that "the question of the *Borba*" (mark, of the *Borba*, and not of any particular member of this group) "was new to him," and he demanded an adjournment. How a question on which the Organization Committee had twice taken a decision could be new to a member of the Organization Committee remains wrapped

in mystery. During the adjournment a meeting of the Organization Committee was held (*Minutes*, p. 40), attended by such of its members as happened to be at the Congress (several members of the Organization Committee, old members of the *Iskra* organization, were absent from the Congress) ~ A discussion of the *Borba* began. The *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists spoke in favour (Martynov, Akimov and Brouckère—pp 36-38), the *Iskra*-ists (Pavlovich, Sorokin, Lange,¹¹ Trotsky, Martov and others) against. Again the Congress split up into the grouping with which we are already familiar. A stubborn struggle over the *Borba* ensued and Comrade Martov made a very circumstantial (p. 38) and "militant" speech, in which he rightly pointed to the "inequality of representation" of the groups in Russia and abroad, and said that it would hardly be "well" to allow a foreign group any "privilege" (words of gold, which are particularly edifying today in the light of the events that have occurred since the Congress!), and that we should not encourage "the organizational chaos in the Party that was characterized by a disunity uncalled for by any considerations of principle" (a hit in the eye of . . . the "minority" at our Party Congress!). Except

* Concerning this meeting, see the "Letter" of Pavlovich,¹⁰ a member of the Organization Committee, *unanimously* elected before the Congress as the editorial board's agent, its seventh member (*Minutes of the League*, p 44).

for the followers of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, nobody came out openly and with reasoned motives in favour of *Borba* until the list of speakers was closed (p 40) It should be said in fairness to Comrade Akimov and his friends that they at least did not wriggle and hide, but advocated their line frankly, and frankly said what they wanted to say

After the list of speakers had been closed, when it was already out of order to speak *on the subject*, Comrade Egorov "insistently demanded that the decision just adopted by the Organization Committee be heard" It is not surprising that the delegates were outraged by this manoeuvre, and Comrade Plekhanov, the chairman, expressed his "astonishment that Comrade Egorov should insist upon his demand" One of two courses was open, one would think; either to express oneself frankly and definitely to the whole Congress on the essence of the question, or to say nothing at all But to allow the list of speakers to be closed and then, under the guise of a "reply to the debate," to present the Congress with a *new* decision of the Organization Committee—and on the very subject that was under discussion—was tantamount to a stab in the back!

The sitting was resumed after dinner, and the Bureau, still in perplexity, decided to waive "formalities" and to resort to the last method adopted at congresses only in extreme cases, viz ,

"comradely explanation" Popov, the representative of the Organization Committee, announced the decision of the Organization Committee, which had been adopted by all its members against one, Pavlovich (p. 43), and which recommended the Congress to invite Ryazanov

Pavlovich declared that he had denied and still denied the legitimacy of the meeting of the Organization Committee, and that its new decision "*contradicts its earlier decision.*" This statement caused an uproar. Comrade Egorov, also a member of the Organization Committee and a member of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, evaded a plain answer on the essence of the question and tried to shift the issue to one of discipline. He claimed that Comrade Pavlovich had violated Party discipline (1), for, having heard his protest, the Organization Committee had decided "not to lay Pavlovich's dissenting opinion before the Congress." The debate now centred around a question of Party discipline, and Plekhanov, amid the loud applause of the delegates, explained for the edification of Comrade Egorov that "*we have no such things as imperative mandates*" (p. 42; cf. p. 379, Standing Orders of the Congress, §7: "The powers of delegates must not be restricted by imperative mandates. In the exercise of their powers, delegates are absolutely free and independent") "The Congress is the supreme Party body," and, consequently, he violates Party dis-

cipline and the standing orders of the Congress who in any way restricts any delegate in addressing the Congress *directly* on *any* question whatsoever affecting the life of the Party. The issue was thus reduced to the dilemma: the circle spirit or the Party spirit? Were the rights of the delegates to be restricted at the Congress for the sake of the imaginary rights or rules of the various bodies and circles, or were *all* lower bodies and old groups to be *completely*, and not only nominally but actually, disbanded before the Congress, pending the creation of genuinely Party official institutions. The reader already perceives how profoundly important from the standpoint of principle was this dispute at the very outset of the Congress (third sitting), a Congress which had set itself the aim of actually restoring the Party. Around this dispute was concentrated, as it were, the conflict between the old circles and small groups, (like *Yuzhny Rabochy*) and the nascent Party. And the anti-*Iskra* groups at once revealed themselves: the Bundist Abramson, Comrade Martynov, an ardent ally of the present *Iskra* editorial board, and our acquaintance Comrade Makhov, all sided with Egorov and the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group against Pavlovich Comrade Martynov, who is now vying with Martov and Axelrod in flaunting his "democracy" in organization, even cited the example of . the army, where an appeal to a superior

authority can be made only through the lower authority!! The true meaning of this "compact" anti-*Iskra* opposition was quite clear to everybody who was present at the Congress or who had carefully followed the internal history of our Party prior to the Congress. It was the purpose of the opposition (perhaps not always realized by all of its representatives, and sometimes pursued by inertia) to guard the independence, individualism and parochial interests of the small, petty groups from being swallowed up in the broad Party that was being built on the *Iskra* principles.

It was precisely from this angle that the question was approached by Comrade Martov, who had not yet joined forces with Martynov. Comrade Martov vigorously took up the cudgels, and rightly so, against those whose "idea of Party discipline does not go beyond the duties of a revolutionary to the particular group of a *lower* order to which he belongs." "*No compulsory*" (Martov's italics) "grouping can be tolerated within a united Party," Martov explained to the champions of circle methods, not foreseeing what a flail these words would be for his own political conduct at the end of the Congress and after. Compulsory grouping cannot be tolerated in the case of the Organization Committee, but can quite well be tolerated in the case of the editorial board. Martov condemns compulsory grouping when he looks at it from the centre, but Martov defends it

the moment he becomes dissatisfied with the composition of the centre .

It is interesting to note that in his speech Comrade Martov laid particular stress not only on Comrade Egorov's "profound error," but also on the political instability displayed by the Organization Committee "A proposal has been submitted on behalf of the Organization Committee," exclaimed Martov in just indignation, "which *runs counter* to the report of the commission" (based, we will add, on the report of members of the Organization Committee—p 43, Koltsov's remarks) "and *to the earlier proposals of the Organization Committee*" (My italics) As we see, *at that time*, before he "turned," Martov clearly realized that substituting Ryazanov for *Borba* in no way removed the utter contradictoriness and unsoundness of the actions of the Organization Committee (Party members may learn from the *Minutes of the League Congress*, p 57, how Martov conceived the matter after he turned). Martov did not then confine himself to an analysis of discipline; he bluntly asked also the Organization Committee "What new circumstance has arisen to necessitate the *alteration*?" (My italics) And, indeed, when the Organization Committee submitted its motion, it did not even have the courage to defend its opinion openly, as Akimov and the others did. Martov denies this (*League Minutes*, p 56), but whoever reads the minutes of

the Congress will see that he is mistaken. Popov, in moving the recommendation of the Organization Committee, *did not say a word* about the motives (*Minutes of the Party Congress*, p. 41). Egorov shifted the issue to one of discipline, and all he said on the essence of the question was: "The Organization Committee may have had new reasons" (but whether it did, and what those new reasons were, is unknown); "it may have forgotten to nominate somebody, and so on." (This "and so on" was the speaker's sole refuge, for the Organization Committee could not have *forgotten* the question of the *Borba*, which it had discussed twice before the Congress and once in the commission) "The Organization Committee did not adopt this decision because it has changed its attitude towards the *Borba* group, but because it wants to remove unnecessary rocks from the path of the future central organization of the Party from the very outset of its activities." This is not a reason, but an evasion of a reason. Every sincere Social-Democrat (and we do not entertain the least doubt about the sincerity of any Congress delegate) is concerned in removing what *he thinks* is a sunk-en rock and in removing it by *the methods* which *he regards* as advisable. Stating reasons means explaining and explicitly stating one's view of things, and not making shift with truisms. *And it was impossible* for them to state

their reasons "without changing their attitude towards *Borba*," because the Organization Committee was also concerned in removing sunken rocks in its earlier and contrary decisions, but what it then regarded as "rocks" was something the very opposite of this. And Comrade Martov attacked this argument very severely and very thoroughly, saying that it was "*petty*" and inspired by a wish to "*burke the issue*," and advised the Organization Committee "*not to be afraid of what people will say*" These words characterize perfectly the nature and meaning of the political shade which played so large a part at the Congress and which is distinguished precisely by its lack of independence, its pettiness, its lack of a line of its own, its fear of what people will say, its constant vacillation between the two definite sides, its fear of plainly stating its credo—in a word, by all the features of a "Marsh" -

* There are people in our Party today who are horrified when they hear this word and raise an outcry about uncomradely methods of controversy. A strange perversion of sensibility due to . . . misplaced adherence to official form! There is scarcely a political party which knows what an internal struggle is that has avoided this term by which the unstable elements who vacillate between the contending sides have always been designated. Even the Germans, who know perfectly well how to keep their internal struggle within precisely defined limits, are not offended by the word *versumpft* (a marsh—*Tr*), are not horrified and do not display ridiculous official prudery.

A consequence of this political spinelessness of the unstable group was, incidentally, that *nobody* except the Bundist Yudin (p. 53) moved a resolution at the Congress to invite one of the members of the *Borba* group. Yudin's resolution received five votes—all Bundists, apparently. The vacillating elements changed sides again! How large was the vote of the middle group is shown approximately by the voting on the resolutions of Koltsov and Yudin on this question: the *Iskra*-ist received thirty-two votes (p. 47); the Bundist received sixteen, i e., the eight anti-*Iskra*-ist votes, plus the two votes of Comrade Makhov (p. 46), the four votes of the members of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, and two other votes. We shall show in a moment that this division cannot possibly be regarded as accidental, but first we will briefly note Martov's *present* opinion of this Organization Committee incident. Martov maintained in the League that "Pavlovich and others fanned passions." One has only to consult the minutes of the Congress to see that the most circumstantial, heated and trenchant speeches against the *Borba* and the Organization Committee were delivered by Martov himself. By trying to lay the "blame" on Pavlovich he only demonstrates his own instability; it was Pavlovich that he, before the Congress, chose as the seventh member of the editorial board; at the Congress he fully associated him-

self with Pavlovich (p 44) against Egorov; but later, when he was beaten by Pavlovich, he began to accuse him of "fanning passions" This is ludicrous

In the *Iskra* (No 56) Martov waxes ironical over the fact that great importance was attached to whether X or Y should be invited But again the irony turns against Martov, for it was this very Organization Committee episode that started the dispute over such an "important" question as inviting X or Y on to the Central Committee or the Central Organ. It is unseemly to measure with two different yardsticks, depending on whether the matter concerns your *own* "group of a lower order" (relative to the Party), or *somebody else's*. This is precisely a philistine and circle, and not a Party attitude towards the matter A simple comparison of Martov's speech at the League (p 57) with his speech at the Congress (p 44) proves this "I cannot understand," said Martov, *inter alia*, in his speech at the League, "how people contrive at all costs to call themselves *Iskra*-ists and at the same time be ashamed of being *Iskra*-ists" A strange failure to understand the difference between "calling oneself" and "being"—between word and deed Martov himself, at the Congress, *called himself* an opponent of compulsory groupings, but after the Congress he came to *be* a supporter of such

D DISSOLUTION OF THE YUZHNY RABOCHY GROUP

The division of the delegates over the Organization Committee question may perhaps seem casual. But such an opinion would be wrong, and in order to dispel it we will depart from the chronological order and now examine an episode which occurred at the end of the Congress, but which was very closely connected with the preceding one. This incident was the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group. The organizational trend of the *Iskra*—complete amalgamation of the Party forces and removal of the chaos which was splitting them—came into conflict here with the interests of *one* group which had done useful work when there was no real party, but which had become superfluous now that the work was being centralized. From the standpoint of its circle interests, the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group was entitled no less than the old *Iskra* editorial board to claim “continuity” and inviolability. But in the interests of the Party, this group should have

submitted to the transfer of its forces to "the proper Party organizations" (p 313, end of resolution adopted by the Congress) From the point of view of circle interests and "philistinism," the dissolution of a useful group, which no more desired this than the old *Iskra* editorial board did, could not but seem a "ticklish matter" (the expression used by Comrade Russov and Comrade Deutsch) But from the point of view of the interests of the Party, its dissolution, "solution" in the Party (Gusev's expression), was essential The *Yuzhny Rabochy* group bluntly declared that it "did not deem it necessary" to proclaim itself dissolved and demanded that "the Congress definitely pronounce its opinion" and pronounce it "immediately yes or no" The *Yuzhny Rabochy* group openly claimed the same "continuity" that the old *Iskra* editorial board began to claim after it had been dissolved! "Although we are all individually members of a united party," Comrade Egorov said, "it nevertheless consists of a number of organizations with which we have to reckon as *historical entities* If such an organization is *not detrimental to the Party, there is no need to dissolve it*"

Thus an important question of principle was quite definitely raised, and all the *Iskra*-ists—inasmuch as their own circle interests had not yet come to the forefront—took a decisive stand

against the unstable elements (the Bundists and two of the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists had already withdrawn from the Congress; they would undoubtedly have been heart and soul in favour of "reckoning with historical entities") The result of the vote was *thirty-one for*, five against and five abstentions (the four votes of the members of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group and one other, that of Byelov, most likely, judging by his earlier pronouncements, p. 308) A group of *ten votes* distinctly opposed to the *Iskra*'s consistent organizational plan and defending the circle principle as against the Party principle, can be quite definitely discerned here. During the debate the *Iskra*-ists presented the question precisely from the standpoint of principle (see Lange's speech, p. 315), they opposed amateurishness and disunity, refused to pay heed to the "sympathies" of individual organizations, and plainly declared that "if the comrades of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* had adhered more strictly to principle earlier, a year or two ago, the unity of the Party and the triumph of the program principles we have sanctioned here would have been achieved earlier" Orlov, Gusev, Lyadov, Muravyov, Russov, Pavlovich, Glebov and Gorin spoke in the same strain Far from protesting against these definite references, repeatedly made at the Congress, to the lack of principle in the policy and "line" of the *Yuzhny Rabochy*, of Makhov and

hers, far from making any reservation on this core, the *Iskra*-ists of the "minority," in the person of Deutsch, vigorously associated themselves with these views, condemned "chaos" and welcomed the "blunt statement of the question" (p 315) by the very same Comrade Russov who, at the *very same sitting*, had the audacity—oh, horror!—to "bluntly put" the question of the old editorial board too on a purely Party basis (p 325).

The proposal to dissolve the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group roused that group to passionate indignation, traces of which are to be found also in the minutes (it should not be forgotten that the minutes offer only a pale reflection of the debates, for they give not the full speeches but only very condensed summaries and extracts). Comrade Egorov even called the bare mention of the *Rabochaya Mysl*¹² group in conjunction with the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group a "lie"—a characteristic sample of the attitude towards consistent Economism that prevailed at the Congress. Even much later, at the 37th sitting, Egorov spoke of the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group with the utmost irritation (p 356) and requested that it be recorded in the minutes that during the discussion on the *Yuzhny Rabochy* the members of this group were not asked either about publication funds or about control by the Central Organ and the Central Committee. During the

discussion on the *Yuzhny Rabochy*, Comrade Popov hinted at a compact majority which was supposed to have predetermined the fate of this group. "Now," he said (p. 316), "*after the speeches of Comrades Gusev and Orlov, everything is clear.*" The meaning of these words is unmistakable now, after the *Iskra*-ists had stated their opinion and moved a resolution, everything was clear, i.e., it was clear that the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group would be dissolved against its will. Here the spokesman of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* himself draws a distinction between the *Iskra*-ists (and, moreover, *Iskra*-ists like Gusev and Orlov) and his own followers, as representing different "lines" of organizational policy. And when the present-day *Iskra* makes out the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group (and Makhov too, most likely?) to be "typical *Iskra*-ists," it only shows vividly that the new editorial board has forgotten the most important (from this group's standpoint) events of the Congress and is anxious to cover up the tracks which point to the elements that went to form the so-called "minority."

Unfortunately, the question of a popular periodical was not raised at the Congress. It was very eagerly discussed by all the *Iskra*-ists both before the Congress and during the Congress itself, outside the sittings, and they agreed that it would be highly irrational at this moment in the life of the Party to undertake the publication

of such a periodical or to convert any of the existing periodicals into one. The anti-*Iskra*-ists expressed the opposite opinion at the Congress; so did the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group in their report, and the fact that a motion to this effect backed by ten signatures was not made can only be attributed to chance, or to a disinclination to raise a "hopeless" issue.

E. THE EQUALITY OF LANGUAGES INCIDENT

We will go back to the order of the Congress sittings

We have now convinced ourselves that even before the Congress proceeded to discuss the questions on the agenda as such, there was clearly revealed not only a perfectly definite group of anti-*Iskra*-ists (eight votes), but also a group of intermediate and unstable elements prepared to support the eight anti-*Iskra*-ists and increase their votes to roughly sixteen or eighteen.

The question of the place of the Bund in the Party, which was discussed at the Congress in extreme, excessive detail reduced itself to one of formulating the principle; the practical solution was postponed until the discussion on organization. In view of the fact that quite a lot of space had been devoted in pre-Congress publications to the subjects pertaining to this question, the discussion at the Congress produced relatively

little that was new. It must, however, be mentioned that the supporters of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* (Martynov, Akimov and Brouckère) while agreeing with Martov's resolution, made the reservation that they realized its inadequacy and differed with the conclusions drawn from it (pp. 69, 73, 83, and 86).

After discussing the place of the Bund, the Congress proceeded to consider the program. This discussion centred mainly around particular amendments of slight interest. The opposition of the anti-*Iskra*-ists on matters of principle found expression only in Comrade Martynov's onslaught on the notorious presentation of the question of spontaneity and consciousness. Martynov, of course, was backed to a man by the Bundists and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists. The unsoundness of his objections was pointed out, among others, by Martov and Plekhanov. It should be noted as a curiosity that the *Iskra* editorial board (on second thought, apparently) have now gone over to the side of Martynov and are saying the very opposite of what they said at the Congress! Evidently, this is in accordance with the celebrated principle of "continuity"... It only remains for us to wait until the editorial board have thoroughly cleared up the question for themselves and explain to us precisely how far they agree with Martynov, on what points exactly, and since when. Meanwhile, we only ask:

has anybody ever known a *party* organ whose editorial board said after a congress the very opposite of what they had said at the congress?

Passing over the dispute about the adoption of *Iskra* as the Central Organ (we dealt with that above), and the beginning of the debate on the Rules (which it will be more convenient to examine in connection with the whole discussion of the Rules), we will proceed to consider the shades of principle that were revealed during the discussion of the program. We will first note one detail of a highly characteristic nature, namely, the debate on proportional representation. Comrade Egorov of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* advocated the inclusion of this point in the program, and did so in a way that called forth the justified remark from Posadovsky (an *Iskra*-ist of the minority) about "a serious difference of opinion." "There can be no doubt," said Comrade Posadovsky, "that we do not agree on the following fundamental question: *must we subordinate our future policy to certain fundamental democratic principles and attribute absolute value to them, or must all democratic principles be exclusively subordinated to the interests of our Party?* I am decidedly in favour of the latter." Plekhanov "fully associated himself" with Posadovsky, objecting in even more definite and emphatic terms to "the absolute value of democratic principles" and to regarding them "abstractly." "Hypothet-

tragic a situation in which the proletariat, in order to consolidate its victory, would have to trample on such political rights as freedom of the press . ." (Plekhanov: "Merci.") (*Minutes of the League*, p 58.) This interpretation *directly* contradicts Comrade Posadovsky's categorical statement *at the Congress* about a "serious difference" and divergence of opinion over "a fundamental question" On this fundamental question, all the *Iskra*-ists at the Congress voiced their *opposition* to the spokesmen of the anti-*Iskra* "Right" (Goldblatt) and of the Congress "Centre" (Egorov) This is a fact, and one may boldly assert that if the "Centre" (I hope this word will shock the "official" supporters of mildness less than any other) had had occasion to speak "*without restraint*" (through the mouth of Comrade Egorov or Makhov) on this or on analogous questions, a serious difference of opinion would have been revealed at once

The difference was revealed even more distinctly in the discussion on "equality of languages" (*Minutes*, pp 171 et seq) On this point it was not so much the debate as the voting that was eloquent counting up the times a vote was taken we get the incredible number of *sixteen*! On what? On whether it was enough to stipulate in the program the equality of all citizens, irrespective of sex, etc , *and language*, or whether it was necessary to stipulate "freedom of lan-

guage" or "equality of languages." Comrade Martov characterized this episode fairly accurately at the League Congress when he said that "a trifling dispute over the formulation of one point of the program became a matter of principle because half the Congress was prepared to overthrow the Program Commission." Precisely. The immediate cause of the conflict was indeed trifling, yet it became a matter of *principle* and, consequently, assumed frightfully bitter forms, even to that of attempts to "overthrow" the Program Commission, to the voicing of the suspicion that there was a desire "to mislead the Congress" (of which Egorov suspected

* Martov adds "On this occasion much harm was done by Plekhanov's witicism about asses" (When the question of freedom of language was being discussed, a Bundist, I think it was, mentioned stud farms among other institutions, whereupon Plekhanov said in a loud undertone "Horses don't talk, but asses sometimes do") I cannot, of course, see anything particularly mild, accommodating, tactful or flexible about this witicism. But I find it strange that Martov, who admitted that the dispute was one concerning a *matter of principle*, made absolutely no attempt to ascertain what this principle was and what shades of opinion found expression here, but confined himself to talking about the "harmfulness" of witicisms. This is indeed a bureaucratic and formalistic attitude! It is true that "much harm was done at the Congress" by biting witicisms, levelled not only at the Bundists, but also at those whom the Bundists sometimes supported and even saved from defeat. However, once you admit that the episode concerned a matter of principle, you cannot make shift with phrases about the "impermissibility" (*Minutes of the League*, p. 58) of certain witicisms.

Martov!), and to personal remarks... of the most abusive kind (p. 178). Even Comrade Popov "expressed regret that mere trifles had given rise to *such an atmosphere*" (my italics, p. 182) as reigned during the course of three sittings (16th, 17th and 18th).

All these expressions very definitely and categorically point to the extremely important fact that the atmosphere of "suspicion" and of the most bitter forms of conflict ("overthrowing")—which was later, at the League Congress, laid at the door of the *Iskra*-ist majority!—actually arose *long before we split into a majority and a minority*. I repeat, this is a fact of enormous importance, a fundamental fact, and failure to understand it leads very many people to form the most frivolous opinions about the artificial nature of the majority that was formed at the end of the Congress. From the present point of view of Comrade Martov, who asserts that nine-tenths of the delegates at the Congress were *Iskra*-ists, the fact that a conflict which became a "matter of principle" and almost led to the overthrow of the commission set up by the Congress could arise over "trifles," over a "trivial" cause, is absolutely inexplicable and absurd. It would be ridiculous to evade this *fact* with lamentations and regrets about "harmful" witticisms. The conflict could not have become a *matter of principle* because of biting witticisms; it could have become

only because of the character of the political groupings at the Congress. It was not biting remarks and witticisms that gave rise to the conflict—they were only a *symptom* of the fact that the very political grouping at the Congress harboured a “contradiction,” that it harboured all the makings of a conflict, that it harboured an internal heterogeneity which burst forth with immanent force at the least cause, even the *most trivial*

On the other hand, from the point of view from which I regard the Congress, and which I deem it my duty to insist upon as a definite political interpretation of events, even though this interpretation may seem offensive to some people—from this point of view the desperately acute conflict over a *matter of principle* that arose from a “trivial” cause is quite explicable and inevitable. Inasmuch as a struggle between the *Iskra*-ists and the anti-*Iskra*-ists went on *all the time* at the Congress, inasmuch as between them stood the unstable elements, and inasmuch as the latter, together with the anti-*Iskra*-ists, controlled one-third of the votes ($8+10=18$, out of 51, according to my calculation, an approximate one, of course), it is perfectly clear and natural that *any falling away from the Iskra-ists of even a small minority* should create the possibility of a victory for the anti-*Iskra* trend and should therefore call forth a “frantic” struggle

This was not the result of inappropriate biting remarks and attacks but of a political combination. It was not biting remarks that gave rise to a political conflict, it was the existence of a political conflict in the very grouping at the Congress that gave rise to biting remarks and attacks—this contrast expresses the essence of our disagreement with Martov on principle in appraising the political significance of the Congress and its results.

During the whole Congress there were in all three major cases of a small number of *Iskra*-ists falling away from the majority—over the question of equality of languages, over §1 of the Rules, and over the elections—and in all three cases a fierce struggle ensued, leading in the end to the severe crisis we have in the Party today. If we want to get a political understanding of this crisis and of this struggle, we must not confine ourselves to phrases about the impermissibility of witticisms, but must examine the political grouping of the shades that clashed at the Congress. The “equality of languages” episode is therefore doubly interesting as far as ascertaining the causes of the difference is concerned, for here Martov was (still was!) an *Iskra*-ist and perhaps fought the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the “Centre” harder than anybody else.

The war opened with a dispute between Comrade Martov and Comrade Lieber, the leader of

the Bundists (pp 171-72) Martov argued that the demand for "equality of citizens" was enough. "Freedom of language" was rejected, but "equality of languages" was forthwith proposed, and Comrade Egorov joined Lieber in the fray Martov declared that it was *fetishism* "when speakers insist on saying that nationalities are equal and transfer inequality to the sphere of language, whereas the question should be examined from just the opposite angle inequality of nationalities exists, and one of its expressions is that people belonging to certain nations are deprived of the right to use their mother tongue" (p 172) Martov was then absolutely right The absolutely baseless attempt of Lieber and Egorov to insist on the correctness of their formulation and to make out that we are unwilling or unable to observe the principle of equality of nationalities was indeed a sort of fetishism As a matter of fact, like "fetish-worshippers," they defended the word and not the principle, and acted not from fear of committing an error of principle, but from fear of what people might say. It is just this shaky mentality (what if "others" blame us for this?)—which we noted in connection with the Organization Committee episode—that was quite clearly displayed here by our entire "Centre." Another of its spokesmen, Lvov, the Mining Area delegate, who stood close to the *Yuzhny Rabochy*, "considers the ques-

tion of the suppression of languages raised by the border districts a very serious one. It is important to include a point on language in our program and thus preclude any assumption of Russifying tendencies of which the Social-Democrats may be suspected." A remarkable explanation of the "seriousness" of the question, indeed. It is very serious *because* the possibility of suspicion by the border districts must be avoided! The speaker says absolutely nothing on the essence of the question, he does not reply to the charge of fetishism, but fully confirms it by revealing a complete lack of argument and by making shift with a reference to what the border districts may say. Everything they *may* say will be *untrue*—he is told. But instead of examining whether it is true or not, he replies: "*They may suspect.*"

Such a presentation of the question, coupled with the claim that it is serious and important, does indeed make it a matter of principle, but by no means the one the Liebers, Egorovs and Lvovs would have liked to discern in it. The principle at issue is: are we to leave it to the organizations and members of the Party to apply the general and fundamental theses of the program to their specific conditions and to develop them for the purpose of such application, or are we, merely out of fear of suspicion, to fill the program with petty details, particular remarks, rep-

etitions and casuistry? The principle at issue is: how can Social-Democrats discern ("suspect") in a fight against casuistry an attempt to restrict elementary democratic rights and liberties? When are we going to wean ourselves at last from this fetishist worship of casuistry?—that was the thought that occurred to us when watching this struggle over "languages."

The grouping of the delegates in this struggle is made particularly clear by the abundant roll-call votes. There were as many as three. All the time the *Iskra* nucleus was solidly opposed by the anti-*Iskra*-ists (eight votes) and, with very slight fluctuations, by the whole Centre (Makhov, Lvov, Egorov, Popov, Medvedyev, Ivanov, Tsaryov and Byelov—only the last two vacillated at first, sometimes abstaining, sometimes voting with us, and it was only during the third vote that their position became fully defined). Of the *Iskra*-ists, several fell away—chiefly the Caucasians (three with six votes)—and thanks to this, the "fetishist" trend in the long run gained the upper hand. During the third vote, when the followers of both trends had clarified their position most fully, the three Caucasians, with six votes, broke away from the *Iskra*-ist majority and went over to the other side, two delegates—Posadovsky and Kostich—with two votes, fell away from the *Iskra*-ist minority, the following went over to the other side or abstained during

the first two votes: Lensky, Stepanov and Gorsky of the *Iskra*-ist majority, and Deutsch of the minority. *The falling away of eight "Iskra" votes (out of a total of thirty-three) gave the superiority to the coalition of the anti-"Iskra"-ists and the unstable elements.* It was this *fundamental fact* of the Congress grouping that was repeated (only *other Iskra*-ists falling away) during the vote on §1 of the Rules and during the elections. It is not surprising that those who suffered defeat in the elections now assiduously shut their eyes to the *political reasons* for that defeat, to the *starting points* of that conflict of shades which progressively disclosed the unstable and politically spineless elements and exposed them ever more relentlessly in the eyes of the Party. The equality of languages episode revealed this struggle to us all the more clearly for the reason that at that time Comrade Martov had not yet earned the praises and approval of Akimov and Makhov.

F. THE AGRARIAN PROGRAM

The inconsistency of principle of the anti-*Iskria*-ists and the "Centre" was also clearly brought out by the debate on the agrarian program which took up so much time at the Congress (see *Minutes*, pp. 190-226) and raised quite a number of extremely interesting questions. As was to be expected, the campaign against the program was launched by Comrade Martynov (after a few minor remarks by Comrades Lieber and Egorov). He brought out the old argument about correcting "this particular historical injustice,"¹³ whereby, he claimed, we were indirectly "sanctifying other historical injustices," and so on. His side was also taken by Comrade Egorov, to whom even "the significance of this program is unclear. Is it a program for ourselves, that is, does it define our demands, or do we want to make it popular?" (121) Comrade Lieber "would like to make the same points as Comrade Egorov." Comrade Makhov spoke with his characteristic emphaticness and declared that

"the majority (?) of the speakers totally fail to understand what the proposed program means and what its aims are." The program submitted, you see, "can hardly be regarded as a Social-Democratic agrarian program"; it... "smacks somewhat of a game at correcting historical injustices"; it has "a shade of demagoguery and adventurism about it." As a theoretical justification of this profundity we get the caricature and oversimplification so customary in vulgar Marxism: the *Iskra*-ists, we are told, "want to treat the peasants as something homogeneous in composition; but as the peasantry split up into classes long ago (?), the putting forward of a single program must inevitably render the whole program demagogic and turn it into a dubious venture when put into practice" (p. 202). Comrade Makhov here "blurted out" the real reason why our agrarian program meets with the disapproval of many Social-Democrats who are prepared to recognize the *Iskra* (as Makhov himself did), but who have absolutely failed to grasp its trend, its theoretical and tactical position. It was the vulgarization of Marxism as applied to a complex and many-sided phenomenon like the present-day system of Russian peasant economy and not differences over particular issues that gave rise, and still gives rise, to the failure to understand this program. And on this vulgar Marxist standpoint the leaders of the anti-*Iskra*

elements (Lieber and Martynov) and of the "Centre" (Egorov and Makhov) quickly found common ground Comrade Egorov gave frank expression also to one of the characteristic traits of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* and of the groups and circles gravitating towards it, namely, their failure to grasp the importance of the peasant movement, their failure to grasp that it was not the overestimation, but, on the contrary, the underestimation of the importance of the movement (and a lack of forces to utilize it) that was the weak side of our Social-Democrats at the time of the first famous peasant revolts "I am far from sharing the infatuation of the editorial board for the peasant movement," said Comrade Egorov, "an infatuation with which many Social-Democrats have been affected since the peasant unrest." But, unfortunately, Comrade Egorov did not take the trouble to give the Congress any precise idea of what this infatuation of the *editorial board* consisted in, he did not take the trouble to give any specific reference to the material published by the *Iskra* Moreover, he forgot that *all* the fundamental points of our agrarian program had already been developed by the *Iskra* in its third issue,¹⁴ that is, *long* before the peasant unrest It would do no harm to those whose "recognition" of the *Iskra* is not merely a verbal one to pay a little more attention to its theoretical and tactical principles!

"No, we cannot do much among the peasants!" Comrade Egorov exclaimed, and he went on to explain that this exclamation was not meant as a protest against any particular "infatuation," but as a denial of our entire position. "It means that our slogan cannot compete with an adventurist slogan." A most characteristic formulation of an unprincipled attitude, which reduce everything to "competition" between the slogans of different parties! And this was said after the speaker had announced his "satisfaction" with the theoretical explanations, in which it was stated that we are striving for lasting success in our agitation, undeterred by temporary failures, and that lasting success (despite the clamour of momentary "competitors") was impossible unless the program had a firm theoretical basis (p 196). What confusion is disclosed by this assurance of "satisfaction," followed immediately by a repetition of the vulgar precepts inherited from the old Economism, for which the "competition of slogans" decided everything—not only the agrarian question, but the entire program and tactics of the economic and political struggle. "You will not induce the agricultural labourer," Comrade Egorov said, "to fight side by side with the rich peasant for the *otrezki*, which to no small extent are in the hands of this rich peasant."

Again we have the simplification that is undoubtedly akin to our opportunist Economism, which insisted that it was impossible to "induce" the proletariat to fight for what was to no small extent in the hands of the bourgeoisie and would fall into its hands to an even larger extent in the future. Again we have the vulgarization that forgets the Russian peculiarities of the general capitalist relations between the agricultural labourer and the rich peasant. The *otrezki* are now oppressing, really oppressing *also* the agricultural labourer, who does not have to be "induced" to fight for emancipation from his state of servitude. It is certain intellectuals who have to be "induced"—induced to take a wider view of their tasks, induced to renounce stereotyped formulas when discussing specific questions, induced to take account of the historical situation, which complicates and modifies our aims. It is only the prejudice that the muzhik is stupid—a prejudice which, as Comrade Martov rightly remarked (p. 202), was to be detected in the speeches of Comrade Makhov and the other opponents of the agrarian program—only this prejudice explains why these opponents forget the actual conditions of life of our agricultural labourers.

Having simplified the question to a bare contrast of worker and capitalist, the spokesmen of our "Centre" tried, as usual, to ascribe their

own narrow-mindedness to the muzhik. "It is precisely because I consider the muzhik, within the limits of his narrow class outlook, a clever fellow," Comrade Makhov remarked, "that I believe he will stand for the petty-bourgeois ideal of seizure and division." Two things are obviously confused here: the description of the class outlook of the muzhik as that of a petty bourgeois, *and the restriction* of this outlook, reducing it to "narrow limits." It is in this reduction that the mistake of the Egorovs and Makhovs lies (just as the mistake of the Martynovs and Akimovs lay in reducing the outlook of the proletarian to "narrow limits"). Yet both logic and history teach us that the petty-bourgeois class outlook may be more or less narrow and more or less progressive, precisely because of the dual status of the petty bourgeois. And our task is not under any circumstances to drop our arms in despair because of the narrowness ("stupidity") of the muzhik or because he is governed by "prejudice," but, on the contrary, to work incessantly to widen his outlook and to help his reason triumph over his prejudice.

The vulgar "Marxist" view of the Russian agrarian question found its culmination in the concluding words of Comrade Makhov's speech, in which that faithful champion of the old *Iskra* editorial board set forth his principles. It was

not for nothing that these words were greeted with applause... true, it was ironical applause. "I do not know, of course, what to call a misfortune," said Comrade Makhov, outraged by Plekhanov's statement that we were not at all alarmed by the movement for a black redistribution, and that it is not we who would attempt to check this progressive (bourgeois progressive) movement "But this revolution, if it can be called such, would not be a revolutionary one. It would be truer to call it, not revolution, but reaction (*laughter*), a revolution that was more like a riot. Such a revolution would throw us back, and it would require a certain amount of time to get back to the position we are in today. Today we have far more than during the French Revolution (*ironical applause*), we have a Social-Democratic Party" (*laughter*). Yes, a Social-Democratic Party which reasoned like Makhov, or which had central institutions that depended on the Makhovs, would indeed only deserve to be laughed at.

Thus we see that even on questions relating solely to principles and raised by the agrarian program, the already familiar grouping at once appeared. The anti-*Iskra*-ists (eight votes) rushed into the fray on behalf of vulgar Marxism, and the leaders of the "Centre," the Egorovs and the Makhovs, trailed after them, constantly erring and straying into the same narrow outlook. It is

to become convinced of the radical difference between them *

Referring to the arguments which smacked of "philistinism," Comrade Trotsky declared that "in the approaching period of revolution we must establish connection with the peasantry".... "In face of this task, the scepticism and political 'farsightedness' of Makhov and Egorov are more harmful than any shortsightedness." Comrade Kostich, another minority *Iskra*-ist, very aptly pointed to the "lack of confidence in himself, in the stability of his principles" displayed by Comrade Makhov, a description which fits our "Centre" perfectly. "In his pessimism Comrade Makhov is at one with Comrade Egorov, although they differ in shade," Comrade Kostich continued. "He forgets that the Social-Democrats are already working among the peasantry, are already directing their movement as far as possible. And their pessimism is narrowing the scope of our work" (P. 210.)

To conclude our examination of the discussion of the program at the Congress, it is worth mentioning the brief debate on the subject of supporting oppositional trends. Our program clearly states that the Social-Democratic Party supports "every *oppositional* and revolutionary movement directed against the existing social and political order in Russia."¹⁶ One would think that this

* Cf Gorin's speech, p 213

last reservation makes it perfectly clear *exactly which* oppositional trends we support Nevertheless, the various shades which had evolved long ago in our Party at once revealed themselves *here too*, difficult as it was to assume that any "perplexity or misunderstandings" were still possible on a question which had been digested so thoroughly! Evidently, it was not a matter of misunderstandings, but of *shades* Makhov, Lieber and Martynov at once sounded the alarm and again found themselves in such a "compact" minority that Comrade Martov most likely would have had to attribute this too to intrigue, machination, diplomacy and the other nice things (see his speech at the League Congress) to which people resort who are incapable of understanding the political reasons for the formation of "compact" groups of both a minority and a majority

Makhov again began with a vulgar simplification of Marxism "The only revolutionary class in our country is the proletariat," he declared, and from this correct premise he forthwith drew an incorrect conclusion: "The rest don't matter, they are mere hangers-on (*general laughter*) Yes, they are mere hangers-on and are only out for their own advantage I am against supporting them" (P 226) Comrade Makhov's inimitable formulation of his position embarrassed many (of his supporters), but as a matter of fact Lieber and Martynov agreed with him when they

proposed to delete the word "oppositional" or to restrict it by an addition: "democratic-oppositional" Plekhanov quite rightly took up the cudgels against this amendment of Martynov's "We must criticize the liberals," he said, "expose their half-heartedness That is true . . . But, while exposing the narrowness and limitations of all movements other than the Social-Democratic, it is our duty to explain to the proletariat that even a constitution which does not confer universal suffrage would be a step forward compared with absolutism, and therefore it should not prefer the existing order to such a constitution" Comrades Martynov, Lieber and Makhov did not agree with this and stuck to their position, which was attacked by Axelrod, Starover and Trotsky and once more by Plekhanov In this, Comrade Makhov again managed to surpass himself First he said that the other classes (other than the proletariat) "don't matter" and that he was "against supporting them" Then he condescended to admit that "while it is essentially reactionary, the bourgeoisie is often revolutionary—for example, in the struggle against feudalism and its survivals" "But there are some groups," he continued, going from bad to worse, "which are always (?) reactionary—such are the handicraftsmen" Such are the gems of principle arrived at by those very leaders of our "Centre" who later foamed at the mouth in defence of the old editorial board!

Even in Western Europe, where the guild system was so strong, the handicraftsmen, like the other petty bourgeois of the towns, were exceptionally revolutionary in the era of the fall of absolutism. And it is particularly absurd of a Russian Social-Democrat to repeat without reflection what our Western comrades say about the present-day handicraftsmen in an era that is separated by a century or half a century from the fall of absolutism. To speak, in Russia, of the reactionary nature of the handicraftsmen on political questions compared with the bourgeoisie is merely to repeat a hackneyed phrase learnt by rote.

Unfortunately, there is no record in the minutes of the number of votes cast for the rejected amendments of Martynov, Makhov and Lieber on this question. All we can say is that the leaders of the anti-*Iskra* elements and one of the leaders of the "Centre"~ here too joined forces in the

~ Another leader of this same group, the "Centre", Comrade Egorov, spoke on the question of supporting the oppositional trends on a different occasion, in connection with Axelrod's resolution on the Socialist-Revolutionaries (p. 359). Comrade Egorov detected a "contradiction" between the demand in the program to *support* every oppositional and revolutionary movement and the *antagonistic* attitude towards both the Socialist-Revolutionaries and the liberals. In another form, and approaching the question from a somewhat different angle, Comrade Egorov here revealed the same narrow conception of Marxism, and the same unstable, semihostile attitude towards the position of the *Iskra* (which he had "recognized") as were revealed by Comrades Makhov, Lieber and Martynov.

already familiar grouping against the *Iskra*-ists. Summing up the *whole* discussion on the *program*, we cannot but conclude that there was *not one* debate at all animated and of general interest that did not reveal the difference of shades about which Comrade Martov and the new *Iskra* editorial board are now keeping silent.

G THE PARTY RULES COMRADE MARTOV'S DRAFT

From the program, the Congress passed to the Party Rules (we leave out the above-mentioned question of the Central Organ and the delegates' reports, which the majority of the delegates were unfortunately unable to present in a satisfactory form) Needless to say, the question of the Party Rules was of tremendous importance to all of us After all, the *Iskra* had acted from the very outset not only as a literary organ but also as an *organizational* nucleus In an editorial in its fourth issue ("Where To Begin?") the *Iskra* had set forth a whole plan of organization, which it pursued systematically and steadily over a period of *three years* When

* In his speech on recognizing the *Iskra* as the Central Organ of the Party, Comrade Popov said, *inter alia*, "I recall the article in No 3 or No 4 of the *Iskra* 'Where To Begin?' Many of the comrades operating in Russia thought it was a tactless article, others thought it was fantastic, while the majority" (? probably the majority around Comrade Popov) "attributed it solely to ambition"

the Second Party Congress adopted the *Iskra* as the Central Organ, two of the three points of the preamble of the resolution on the subject (p. 147) were devoted *precisely to this plan and to these ideas of organization advocated by "Iskra,"* namely, its role in directing the *practical* work of the Party and the leading part it played in the work of attaining unity. It is quite natural, therefore, that the work of the *Iskra* and the entire work of organizing the Party, the entire work of *actually* restoring the Party, *could not* be regarded as finished until the whole Party had adopted and officially registered certain definite ideas of organization. This task was to be performed by the rules of organization of the Party.

The principal ideas which the *Iskra* strove to make the basis of the Party's organization amounted essentially to the following two: first, the idea of centralism, which defined in principle the method of deciding all particular and detail questions of organization; second, the special function of an organ, a newspaper, for ideological leadership, an idea which took into account the temporary and special requirements of the Russian Social-Democratic working-class movement amidst conditions of political slavery, on the

(p. 140) As the reader sees, I have long been accustomed to the opinion that my political views are attributable to ambition, an opinion now being rehashed by Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov.

understanding that the *initial* base of operations for the revolutionary assault would be set up abroad. The first idea, the only correct one in principle, was to permeate the entire Rules, the second, being a particular idea necessitated by temporary circumstances of place and mode of action, took the form of a *seeming* departure from centralism in the proposal to set up *two centres, a Central Organ and a Central Committee*. Both these principal *Iskra* ideas of Party organization had been developed by me in the *Iskra* editorial (No. 4) "Where To Begin?" and in *What Is To Be Done?* and, finally, were explained in detail in a form that practically resembled rules in *A Letter to a Comrade*. Actually, all that remained was a certain amount of drafting in order to obtain the formulation of the paragraphs of the Rules which were to embody just those ideas, if the recognition of the *Iskra* was not to be merely nominal, a mere conventional phrase. I have already pointed out in the preface to the new edition of my *A Letter to a Comrade* that a simple comparison of the Party Rules with this pamphlet is enough to establish the complete identity of the ideas on organization contained in both.

As regards the drafting work in formulating the *Iskra's* ideas of organization in the Rules, I must deal with an incident mentioned by Comrade Martov "A statement of fact," said Mar-

to at the League Congress (p 58), "will show how unexpected my lapse into opportunism on this paragraph (i.e., paragraph one) was to Lenin. About a month and a half or two months before the Congress I showed Lenin my draft, in which §1 was formulated in the way I proposed it at the Congress. Lenin objected to my draft on the ground that it was too detailed, and told me that all he liked was the idea of §1—the definition of Party membership—which he would incorporate in his Rules with certain amendments, because he thought that mine was not well formulated. Thus, you see that Lenin had long been acquainted with my formulation, that he knew my views on the subject. Thus, you see that I came to the Congress with my vizor up, that I did not conceal my views. I warned him that I would oppose mutual co-option, the principle of unanimity in cases of co-option to the Central Committee and the Central Organ, and so on."

As regards the warning about opposition to mutual co-option, we shall see how matters really stood in its proper place. At present we will deal with this "open vizor" of Martov's rules. At the League Congress, recounting from memory this episode of his badly formulated draft (which Martov himself withdrew at the Congress because it was badly formulated, and which after the Congress he, with his characteristic consistency, again brought out into the light of day), Martov,

as is usually the case, forgot a good deal and, therefore, again muddled things up. One would have thought that there had already been cases enough to warn him against quoting private conversations and relying on his memory (people involuntarily recall only what is to their advantage!)—nevertheless, for the want of other material, Comrade Martov used material of inferior quality. Today even Comrade Plekhanov is beginning to imitate him—evidently, a bad example is contagious.

I could not have “liked” the “idea” of paragraph one of Martov’s draft, for that draft did not contain a *single idea* that came up at the Congress. His memory played him false. I have been fortunate enough to find Martov’s draft among my papers, and in it “*paragraph one is not formulated in the way he proposed it at the Congress*”¹ So much for the “open vizor”¹

§1 of Martov’s draft “A member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who, accepting its program, works actively to carry out its aims under the control and direction of the organs (*sic!*) of the Party”

§1 of my draft “A Party member is one who accepts its program and who supports the Party both financially and by personal participation in one of the Party organizations”

§1 as formulated by Martov at the Congress and adopted by the Congress “A member of the

Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who accepts its program, supports the Party financially and renders it regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organizations”

It is clearly evident from this comparison that there is no *idea* in Martov's draft but only *empty phrases*. It goes without saying that Party members must work under the control and direction of the *organs* of the Party; *it cannot be otherwise*, and it is talked about only by those who love to talk in order to say nothing, who love to flood “rules” with huge quantities of verbal water and bureaucratic formulas (i.e., formulas that are useless for the matter in hand and supposed to be useful for display). The *idea* of the first paragraph appears only when the question is asked can the *Party organs* exercise *actual* direction over the Party members who *do not belong* to any of the *Party organizations*? There is not even a trace of this *idea* in Comrade Martov's draft. Consequently, *I could not have been acquainted* with the “views” of Comrade Martov “on this subject,” for there are *no views on this subject* in Comrade Martov's draft. Comrade Martov's statement of fact proves to be a *muddle*.

On the other hand, it must be said about Comrade Martov that from my draft “he knew my views on this subject” and did not protest

against them, did not reject them either on the editorial board, although my draft was shown to everyone two or three weeks before the Congress, or in the hearing of the delegates, who were acquainted *only* with my draft More, even *at the Congress*, when I moved my draft Rules and defended them *before the election of the Rules Commission took place*, Comrade Martov plainly announced "I associate myself with Comrade Lenin's conclusions *Only on two questions do I differ with him*" (my italics)—on the mode of constituting the Council and on unanimous co-option (p 157). *Not a word was yet said about any difference over §1*

In his pamphlet on the state of siege, Comrade Martov deemed it necessary to recall his rules once more, and in great detail He assures

* Incidentally, the Minutes Commission, in Appendix XI, published the draft Rules "*moved at the Congress by Lenin*" (p 393) Here the Minutes Commission has also muddled things a little It has confused my *original* draft, which was shown to all the delegates (and to many before the Congress) with the draft *moved at the Congress*, and published the former under the guise of the latter Of course, I have no objection to my drafts being published, even in all their stages of preparation, but there was no need to cause confusion And confusion has been caused, for Popov and Martov (pp 154 and 157) criticized formulations in my draft that was actually moved at the Congress *which are not in the draft* published by the Minutes Commission (cf p 394 §§ 7 and 11) With a little more care, the mistake could easily have been detected simply by comparing the pages I mentioned.

us there that his rules, to which, with the exception of certain minor particulars, he is prepared to subscribe even now (February 1904—we cannot say how it will be three months hence), “quite clearly expressed his disapproval of the hypertrophy of centralism” (p. IV). The reasons Comrade Martov *now* gives for not submitting this draft to the Congress are, firstly, that “his *Iskra* training had inspired him with disdain for rules” (when it suits Comrade Martov the word *Iskra* means for him, not the narrow circle spirit, but a most consistent trend! It is a pity, however, that Comrade Martov’s three years’ *Iskra* training has not imbued him with disdain for the anarchist phrasemongering by which the unstable mentality of the intellectual is capable of justifying the violation of rules adopted by common consent) Secondly, that Comrade Martov, don’t you see, wanted to avoid “introducing any discord whatsoever into the tactics of that basic organizational nucleus which the *Iskra* constituted” Wonderfully consistent, isn’t it? On a question of *principle* regarding an opportunist formulation of §1, or the hypertrophy of centralism, Comrade Martov was so afraid of discord (which is terrible only from the narrowest circle point of view) that he refrained from submitting his disagreement even to a nucleus like the editorial board! On the *practical* question of the composition of the central bodies, Comrade Mar-

lov appealed for the assistance of the Bund and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists against the vote of the majority of the members of the *Iskra* organization (that real *basic organizational nucleus*) The "discord" in his phrases, which smuggle in the circle spirit in defending a quasi-editorial board in order to deny the "circle spirit" in the appraisal of the question by those who are most competent to judge—this discord Comrade Martov does not notice To punish him, we will quote his draft Rules *in full*, noting for our part what *views* and what *hypertrophy* they reveal

"Draft of Party Rules—1 Party Membership—1) A member of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party is one who, accepting its program, works actively to carry out its aims under the control and direction of the organs of the Party—2) The question of expelling a member from the Party for conduct incompatible with the interests of the Party shall be decided by the Central Committee [The sentence of expulsion, giving the reasons, shall be preserved in the Party files and shall be communicated, on request, to every Party Committee The decision of the Central Committee to expel a member may be appealed against to the Congress on the demand of two or more committees]" I shall indicate by square brackets the passages in Martov's draft which are *obviously* meaningless, since they lack not only "ideas," but even definite conditions or demands—like the inimitable specification in

* I must state that unfortunately I could not find the first variant of Comrade Martov's draft, which consisted of some forty-eight paragraphs and suffered even more from "hypertrophy" of purposeless formalism

the "rules" *where exactly* a sentence of expulsion is to be preserved, or the provision that the decision of the Central Committee to expel a member (and not all its decisions in general?) may be appealed against to the congress. This, indeed, is hypertrophy of phrasemongering, or real bureaucratic formalism, which frames superfluous, obviously useless, or red tape points and paragraphs. "...II. Local Committees—3) In its local work, the Party is represented by the Party committees." (how new and clever!) "...4) [The recognized Party committees are those committees that exist at the time of the Second Congress and are represented at the Congress]—5) New Party committees, in addition to those mentioned in §4, shall be appointed by the Central Committee, [which shall either endorse as the committee the existing membership of the given local organization, or shall set up a local committee by reforming the latter].—6) The committees may supplement their membership by means of co-option—7) The Central Committee has the right to supplement the membership of a local committee with comrades (known to it), the number of whom, however, shall not exceed one-third of the membership of the committee..." A perfect sample of bureaucracy Why not exceeding one-third? What is the purpose? What is the sense of this restriction which restricts nothing, considering that the *supplementing* may be repeated over and over again? "...8) [If a local committee has fallen apart or has been broken up" (does this mean that not all the members have been arrested?) "by persecution, the Central Committee shall restore it"] (In defiance of §7? Does not Comrade Martov perceive a similarity between §8 and those Russian laws on orderly conduct which command citizens to work on week days and rest on holidays?) "...9) [An ordinary Party Congress may instruct the Central Committee to reform the composition of any local committee if the activities of the latter are deemed to be incompatible with the interests of the Party. In the latter case the existing

committee shall be deemed dissolved and the comrades in the area of its operations exempt from subordination "to it"] The provision contained in this paragraph is as highly beneficial as the provision contained to this day in the Russian law which reads "Drunkenness is forbidden to all persons without exception" " 10) [The local committees of the Party shall direct all the propagandist, agitational and organizational activities of the Party in their localities and shall do all in their power to assist the Central Committee and the Central Organ of the Party in carrying out the general Party tasks entrusted to them"] Ugh! In the name of all that's holy, what is the purpose of this? 11) ["The internal regulations of a local organization, the mutual relations between a committee and the groups subordinate to it" (do you hear this, Comrade Axelrod?), "and the limits of the powers and autonomy" (are not the limits of powers identical with the limits of autonomy?) "of these groups shall be determined by the committee itself and communicated to the Central Committee and the editorial board of the Central Organ"] . (An omission it is not stated where these communications are to be filed). "12) [All groups and individual Party members subordinate to committees have the right to demand that their opinions and wishes on any subject be communicated to the Central Committee of the Party and its Central Organ] —13) Local Party committees shall contribute from their revenues to the funds of the Central Committee such a part of them as the Central Committee shall assess —III Organizations for the purpose of agitation in other languages (other than Russian) —14) [For the purpose of carrying on agitation in any non-Russian language and

* We draw Comrade Axelrod's attention to this word Why, this is terrible! Here are the roots of that "Jacobinism" which goes to the length even even of altering the composition of an editorial board .

of organizing workers among whom such agitation is carried on, separate organizations may be set up in places where such specialized agitation and the setting up of such organizations are deemed necessary.]—15) The question as to whether such a necessity exists shall be decided by the Central Committee of the Party, and in disputed cases shall be submitted to the Party Congress "

The first part of the paragraph is superfluous in view of subsequent provisions in the Rules, and the second part concerning disputed cases, is simply ludicrous .

"16) [The local organizations mentioned in §14 shall be autonomous in their special affairs, but shall act under the control of the local committee and be subordinate to it, the forms of this control and the character of the organizational relations between a committee and a special organization shall be determined by the local committee"... (Well, thank God! It is now clear that this whole spate of empty words was entirely superfluous)

.. "In respect to the general affairs of the Party, such organizations act as part of the committee organization }

—17) [The local organizations mentioned in §14 may form an autonomous league for the effective achievement of their special aims. A league of this kind may have its own special press and administrative bodies, both the former and the latter being under the direct control of the Central Committee of the Party. The rules and regulations of a league of this kind shall be drawn up by itself, but shall be subject to endorsement by the Central Committee of the Party]—18) [An autonomous league mentioned in §17 may include local committees of the Party if, by reason of local conditions, they devote themselves mainly to agitation in the given language. Note: While forming part of an autonomous league, such a committee does not cease to be a committee of the Party'] .. (This entire paragraph is highly valuable and wonderfully clever, the note even more so)...
"19) [The communications of local organizations affiliated

to an autonomous league, with the central bodies of that league, shall be controlled by the local committees] —20) [The central press and administrative bodies of autonomous leagues shall stand in the same relation to the Central Committee of the Party as the local committees of the Party]—IV Central Committee and Press Organs of the Party—21) [The Party as a whole shall be represented by its Central Committee and press organs, political and scientific]—22) The function of the Central Committee shall be to exercise the general direction of all the practical activities of the Party, to see to the proper utilization and allocation of all its forces, to exercise control over the activities of all sections of the Party, to supply the local organizations with literature, to organize the technical apparatus of the Party, to summon Party congresses.—23) The function of the press organs of the Party shall be to exercise the ideological direction of Party life, to carry on propaganda for the Party program, and to have charge of the scientific and journalistic elaboration of the world outlook of Social-Democracy —24) All local committees of the Party, as well as the autonomous leagues, shall maintain direct communication both with the Central Committee of the Party and the editorial boards of the Party organs and shall keep them periodically informed of the progress of the movement and of organizational work in their localities —25) The editorial board of the press organs of the Party shall be appointed at Party congresses and shall function until the next congress —26) [The editorial board shall be autonomous in its internal affairs] and may in the interval between congresses supplement or alter its membership, informing the Central Committee in each case —27) All statements issued by the Central Committee or receiving its sanction shall be published in the Party organ on the demand of the Central Committee —28) The Central Committee, by agreement with the editorial

boards of the Party organs, shall set up special literary groups for various forms of literary work—29) The Central Committee shall be appointed at Party congresses and shall function until the next congress. The Central Committee may supplement its membership by means of co-option, without restriction as to numbers, each time informing the editorial boards of the central organs of the Party—V The Party Organization Abroad—30) The Party organization abroad shall carry on propaganda among Russians living abroad and organize the socialist elements among them. It shall be headed by an elected administrative body—31) The autonomous leagues affiliated to the Party may maintain branches abroad to assist in carrying out the special aims of these leagues. These branches shall constitute autonomous groups within the general organization abroad—VI Party Congresses—32) The highest Party authority is its Congress—33) [The Party Congress shall lay down its program, rules and the guiding principles of its activities, it shall control the work of all Party bodies and settle disputes arising between them]—34) The right to be represented at congresses shall be enjoyed by a) all the local committees of the Party, b) the central administrative bodies of all the autonomous leagues affiliated to the Party, c) the Central Committee of the Party and the editorial boards of its central organs, d) the Party organization abroad—35) Credentials may be entrusted to proxies, but no delegate shall hold more than three valid credentials. A credential may be divided between two representatives. Binding instructions are forbidden—36) The Central Committee shall be empowered to invite to the congress with voice but no vote, comrades whose presence may be useful—37) Amendments of the Program or Rules of the Party shall require a two-thirds majority; other questions shall be decided by a simple majority.—38) A congress shall be deemed properly constituted if

more than half the Party committees existing at the time of the congress are represented—39) Congresses shall as far as possible be summoned once every two years [If for reasons beyond the control of the Central Committee a congress cannot be summoned within this period, the Central Committee shall postpone it on its own responsibility]”

Any reader who, by way of an exception, has been patient enough to read these so-called rules to the end will certainly not expect me to give special reasons for the following conclusions. First conclusion the rules suffer from almost incurable dropsy. Second conclusion it is impossible to discover in these rules any special shade of views on organization evincing a disapproval of hypertrophy of centralism. Third conclusion. Comrade Martov acted most sensibly in concealing from the eyes of the world (and withholding from discussion at the Congress) over ^{28/29} of his rules. Only it is rather odd that he should talk about an open vizor in connection with this concealment.

H DISCUSSION ON CENTRALISM PRIOR TO THE SPLIT AMONG THE ISKRA-ISTS

Before passing to the really interesting question of the formulation of §1 of the Rules, a question which undoubtedly discloses the existence of different shades of opinion, let us dwell a little more on that brief general discussion of the Rules which occupied the 14th and part of the 15th Congress sittings. This discussion is of some significance, inasmuch as it *preceded* the complete break within the *Iskra* organization on the question of the composition of the central bodies. The subsequent debate on the Rules in general, and in particular on co-opting members, took place *after* the break in the *Iskra* organization. Naturally, *prior* to the break we were capable of expressing our views more impartially, in the sense that they were more independent of the question of the personal composition of the Central Committee—a question which agitated all of us. Comrade Martov, as I have already

remarked, *associated himself* (p 157) with my views on organization, only making the reservation that he differed on two *particular points*. Both the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Centre," on the contrary, at once launched into the fray against both *fundamental* ideas of the whole *Iskra* plan of organization (and, consequently, against the Rules in their entirety) against centralism and against "two centres." Comrade Lieber referred to my Rules as "organized distrust" and discerned *decentralism* in the proposal for two centres (as did Comrades Popov and Egorov). Comrade Akimov wanted the jurisdiction of the local committees to be defined more widely, in particular, that they be granted "the right to alter their composition themselves." "They should be allowed greater freedom of action. The local committees should be elected by the active workers in their localities, just as the Central Committee is elected by the representatives of all the active organizations in Russia. But if even this cannot be allowed, let the number of members that the Central Committee may appoint to local committees be limited." (P 158) Comrade Akimov, as you see, suggested an argument against "hypertrophy of centralism," but Comrade Martov remained deaf to these weighty arguments until defeat over the question of the composition of the central bodies induced him to follow Akimov. He remained deaf even when

- Comrade Akimov suggested to him the "*idea*" of *his own Rules* (§7—restricting the right of the Central Committee to appoint members to the committees)! At that time Comrade Marlov did not yet want "discord" with us, and for that reason he was prepared to tolerate discord both with Comrade Akimov and with himself.... At that time the only opponents of "monstrous centralism" were those to whom *Iskra's* centralism was clearly *disadvantageous* it was opposed by Akimov, Lieber and Goldblatt, *followed*, cautiously and circumspectly (so that they could always turn back), by Egorov (see pp 156 and 276), and others At that time it was still clear to the vast majority in the Party that it was precisely the parochial, circle interests of the Bund, the *Yuzhny Rabochy*, etc, that evoked the protest against centralism. As a matter of fact, now, too, it is clear to the majority of the Party that it is precisely the circle interests of the old *Iskra* editorial board that impel it to protest against centralism

Take Comrade Goldblatt's speech, for example (pp 160-61) He protests against my "monstrous" centralism, and claims that it would lead to the "destruction" of the lower organizations, that it is "permeated through and through with the desire to confer unrestricted powers on the centre and the unrestricted right to interfere in everything," that it allows the organizations

"only one right—to submit without a murmur to orders from above," etc "The centre proposed by the draft would find itself in a vacuum, it would have no peripheral organizations around it, but only an amorphous mass in which its executive agents would move " But this is exactly the kind of *false phrasemongering* to which the Martovs and Axelrods treated us after their defeat at the Congress The Bund was laughed at when it fought *our* centralism while granting *even more definitely* outlined unrestricted rights to its *own* central body (for example, to admit and expel members, and even to refuse to admit delegates to congresses) And when the matter is analyzed, the howls of the *minority* will also be laughed at, for they cried out against centralism and against the Rules when they were in the minority, but lose no time in taking advantage of the Rules now that they have managed to become the majority

The grouping was also clearly to be discerned over the question of the two central bodies *all* the *Iskra*-ists were opposed by Lieber, by Akimov (the former having taken up the now popular Axelrod-Martov tune about the Central Organ enjoying predominance over the Central Committee in the Council), by Popov and by Egorov The plan for two central bodies followed logically from the ideas of organization which the *old Iskra* had always advocated (and which had been approved,

verbally, by the Popovs and Egorovs!) The policy of the *old Iskra* militated against the plans of the *Yuzhny Rabochy*, the plans to create a parallel popular organ and to convert it virtually into the dominant organ. There lies the root of the contradiction, so strange at a first glance, that all the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the entire Marsh were in favour of one central body, that is, of *seemingly greater centralism*. Of course there were delegates (especially among the Marsh) who scarcely had a clear idea where the organizational plans of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* would lead and were bound to lead in the course of events, but they were impelled to follow the anti-*Iskra*-ists by their own irresolute characters and lack of self-confidence.

Of the speeches by *Iskra*-ists during *this* debate on the Rules (the one preceding the split among the *Iskra*-ists), particularly remarkable were those of Comrades Martov ("association" with my ideas of organization) and Trotsky. The latter answered Comrades Akimov and Lieber in such a way that every word of the answer exposes the utter falsity of the "Minority's" post-Congress conduct and theories. "The Rules, he" (Comrade Akimov) "said, do not define the jurisdiction of the Central Committee with enough precision. I cannot agree with him. On the contrary, this definition is precise and means that inasmuch as the Party is an entity, its control over the local committees must be ensured. Comrade Lieber, bor-

rowing my expression, said that the Rules were 'organized distrust' That is true But I used this expression in reference to the rules proposed by the Bund spokesmen, which represented 'organized distrust' on the part of a section of the Party towards the whole Party. Our Rules, on the other hand" (at that time, before the defeat over the composition of the central bodies, the Rules were "ours") "represent the organized distrust of the Party towards all its sections, that is, control over all local, district, national and other organizations" (P 158) Yes, *our* Rules are *here* correctly described, and we would advise those to bear this more constantly in mind, who are now assuring us with an easy conscience that it was the intriguing majority who conceived and introduced the system of "organized distrust" or, which is the same thing, "the state of siege " One has only to compare the speech quoted with the speeches made at the Congress of the League Abroad to get a specimen of political spinelessness, a specimen of how the views of Martov and Co. changed, depending on whether it was their own lower body or another that was in question

I PARAGRAPH ONE OF THE RULES ;

We have already cited the various formulations around which an interesting debate arose at the Congress. This debate took up nearly two sittings and ended with *two roll-call* votes (during the whole course of the Congress, if I am not mistaken, there were all in all eight roll-call votes which were resorted to only in very important cases because of the great loss of time they involved). The question at issue was undoubtedly one of principle. The interest of the Congress in the debate was tremendous. *All* the delegates voted—a rare occurrence at our Congress (as at any big congress) and one that likewise testifies to the interest displayed by the disputants.

What, then, was the sum and substance of the matter in dispute? I have already said at the Congress and have since repeated it time and again that "I by no means consider our difference (over §1) so vital as to be a matter of life or death to the Party. We shall certainly not perish because of an unfortunate clause in the Rules!"

(F 250) Taken by itself, this difference, although it disclosed shades of principle, could never have called forth that divergence (actually, to speak unreservedly, that split) which took place after the Congress. But every *little* difference may become a *big* difference if it is insisted on, if it is put into the foreground, if people *set about* searching for all the roots and branches of the difference. Every *little* difference may assume *tremendous* importance if it serves as the starting point for a *turn* towards definite mistaken views, and if these mistaken views, by virtue of new and additional divergences, are combined with *anarchist* actions which bring the Party to the point of a split.

And that is just how matters stood in the present case. A comparatively slight difference over §1 has now acquired tremendous importance, because precisely it served as the turning point towards the opportunist profundities and the anarchist phrasemongering of the minority (especially at the League Congress and subsequently in the columns of the new *Iskra* as well). It was this that served as the *starting point* for that coalition of the *Iskra* minority with the anti-*Iskra*-ists and with the Marsh which had finally assumed definite shape by the time of the elections, and without understanding which *it is impossible to understand* the major and fundamental divergence over the composition of the central bodies. The

slight mistake of Martov and Axelrod over §1 was a slight crack in our pot (as I put it at the Congress of the League). The pot might be bound tight with a *hard* knot (and not a hangman's knot, as it was misunderstood by Martov, who during the Congress of the League was in a state bordering on hysteria) Or *all* efforts might be directed towards widening the crack and splitting the pot. And this is exactly what happened, thanks to the boycott and similar anarchist measures of the zealous Martovists. The difference over paragraph one played no small part in the elections of the central bodies, and Martov's defeat over this question led him into a "struggle of principles" with the use of grossly mechanical and even outrageous methods (his speeches at the Congress of the League of the Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad)

Now, after all these happenings, the question of §1 has thus assumed *tremendous importance* and we must clearly realize both the character of the groupings at the Congress during the voting on this paragraph and—which is incomparably more important—the real nature of those *shades of views* which revealed themselves, or began to reveal themselves, over §1 Now, after the events with which the reader is acquainted, the question has been *put* in this way: was Martov's formulation, which was supported by Axelrod, affected by his (or their) instability, wavering and polit-

ical vagueness, as I expressed it at the Party Congress (p 333), by his (or their) deviation towards Jaurèsism and anarchism, as Plekhanov summarised at the League Congress (*League Minutes*, p 102 and elsewhere); or was my formulation, which was supported by Plekhanov, affected by a wrong, bureaucratic, formalistic, pompadour, un-Social-Democratic conception of centralism? *Opportunism and anarchism, or bureaucracy and formalism?*—that is the way the question *has been put now* that the little difference has become a big difference. And when discussing the pros and cons of my formulation *on their merits*, we must *bear in mind* just *this* presentation of the question, which has been forced upon us all by the events, and which, I would say if it did not sound too pompous, has been evolved by history.

Let us begin the examination of these pros and cons with an analysis of the debate at the Congress. The first speech, that of Comrade Egorov, is interesting only for the fact that his attitude (*non liquet*, it is still not clear to me, I still do not know where the truth lies) is very characteristic of the attitude of many delegates who found it difficult to grasp the rights and wrongs of this really new and fairly complex and detailed question. The next speech, that of Comrade Axelrod, at once raised the question of principle. This was the first speech that Comrade Axelrod made at the Congress on questions of principle,

or for that matter, the first Congress speech he made at all, and it can scarcely be claimed that his *début* with the celebrated "professor" was particularly fortunate. "I think," Comrade Axelrod said, "that we must draw a distinction between the concepts Party and organization. These two concepts are being confused here. And the confusion is dangerous." This was the first argument against my formulation. Examine it more closely. When I say that the Party should be a *sum* (and not a mere arithmetical sum, but a complex) of *organizations*,~ does that mean that I "confuse"

* The word "organization" is usually employed in two senses, a broad and a narrow one. In the narrow sense it signifies an individual nucleus of a collective of people, even if constituted to only a minimum degree. In the broad sense it signifies the sum of such nuclei welded into a single whole. For example, the navy, the army, or the state represents at one and the same time a sum of organizations (in the narrow sense of the word) and a variety of social organizations (in the broad sense of the word). The Department of Education is an organization (in the broad sense of the word) and consists of a number of organizations (in the narrow sense of the word). Similarly, the Party is an organization, and *should* be an organization (in the broad sense of the word), at the same time, the Party should consist of a number of different organizations (in the narrow sense of the word). Therefore, when he spoke of drawing a distinction between the concepts Party and organization, Comrade Axelrod, firstly, did not take account of the difference between the broad and the narrow meaning of the word organization, and, secondly, did not observe that he himself was *lumping together* organized and unorganized elements

the concepts Party and organization? Of course not I thereby express clearly and precisely my wish, my demand, that the Party, as the vanguard of the class, should be as *organized* as possible, that the Party should admit to its ranks only such elements *as lend themselves to at least a minimum of organization*. My opponent, on the contrary, wants to *lump together* organized elements and unorganized elements in the Party, those who submit to direction and those who do not, the advanced and the incorrigibly backward—for the corrigibly backward may join the organization. *This confusion* is indeed *dangerous*. Comrade Axelrod further cited the "strictly secret and centralized organizations of the past" (the Zemlya i Volya and the Narodnaya Volya). around them, he said, "were grouped a large number of people who did not belong to the organization but who helped it in one way or another and who were regarded as Party members . . . This principle should be even more strictly observed in the Social-Democratic organization." Here we come to one of the *nodal* points of the matter—is "this principle" really a Social-Democratic one—this principle which allows people who do not belong to any of the organizations of the Party and who only "help it in one way or another" to call themselves Party members? And Plekhanov gave the only possible reply to this question when he said "Axelrod was wrong in citing the 'seventies

At that time there was a well-organized and splendidly disciplined centre; around it there were the organizations of various categories it had created; and what remained outside these organizations was chaos, anarchy. The component elements of this chaos called themselves party members, but this rather damaged than benefited the cause. What we should do is not imitate the anarchy of the 'seventies, but avoid it." Thus "this principle," which Comrade Axelrod wanted to pass off as a Social-Democratic one, is in reality an *anarchist principle*. To refute this, one must show that control, direction and discipline *are possible* outside an organization; that conferring the title of Party members on "the elements of chaos" is *necessary*. The supporters of Comrade Martov's formulation did not show, and could not show, *either* of these things. Comrade Axelrod took as an example "a professor who regards himself as a Social-Democrat and pronounces himself such." To bring to its logical conclusion the thought contained in this example, Comrade Axelrod should have gone on to tell us whether the organized Social-Democrats themselves regard this professor as a Social-Democrat. By failing to raise this second question, Comrade Axelrod abandoned his argument halfway. And, indeed, one thing or the other. Either the organized Social-Democrats regard the professor in question as a Social-Democrat, in which case why should they not assign

him to one of the Social-Democratic organizations? For only if the professor were thus assigned would his "pronouncement" answer to his actions, and not be empty talk (as professorial pronouncements all too frequently are) Or the organized Social-Democrats do *not* regard the professor as a Social-Democrat, in which case it would be absurd, senseless and *harmful* to allow him the right to bear the honourable and responsible title of Party member The matter therefore reduces itself either to the consistent application of the principle of organization, or the sanctification of disunity and anarchy Are we to build the Party on the basis of the already formed and already welded core of *Social-Democrats* which brought about the Party Congress, for instance, and which is to enlarge and multiply Party organizations of all kinds, or are we to content ourselves with the soothing *phrase* that all who help are Party members? "If we adopt Lenin's formula," Comrade Axelrod continued, "we shall throw overboard a section of those who, although they may not be directly admitted to the organization, are nevertheless Party members " The confusion of concepts of which Comrade Axelrod wanted to accuse me, stands out here quite clearly in his own case he already takes it for granted that all who help *are* Party members, whereas that is what the whole dispute is about, and our opponents have still to *prove* the necessity and value

of such an interpretation. What is the meaning of the phrase "throwing overboard," which at first glance seems so terrible? Even if only members of organizations which are recognized as Party organizations are regarded as Party members, still people who cannot "directly" join any Party organization may work in an organization which is not a Party organization but is associated with the Party. Consequently, there can be no talk of throwing anybody overboard, in the sense of preventing them from working, from taking part in the movement. On the contrary, the stronger our Party organizations consisting of *real* Social-Democrats are, and the less wavering and instability there is *within* the Party, the broader, the more varied, the richer and more fertile will be the influence of the Party on the elements of the working-class *masses* surrounding it and guided by it. After all, the Party, as the vanguard of the working class, must not be confused with the entire class. And Comrade Axelrod is guilty of just this confusion (which is characteristic of our opportunist Economism in general) when he says: "We shall first of all, of course, create an organization of the most active elements of the Party, an organization of revolutionaries; but since we are the party of a class, we must take care not to leave outside its ranks people who consciously, although perhaps not very actively, associate themselves with that party." Firstly, the

active elements of the Social-Democratic Labour Party will include not only organizations of revolutionaries, but a *whole number* of workers' organizations recognized as Party organizations. Secondly, how, by what logic, does the conclusion that it is unnecessary to make any distinction between those who *belong* to the Party and those who *associate* themselves with the Party follow from the fact that we are the party of a class? Just the contrary precisely because there are differences in degree of consciousness and degree of activity, a distinction must be made in degree of proximity to the Party. We are the Party of a class, and therefore *almost the entire class* (and in times of war, in the period of civil war, the entire class) should act under the leadership of our Party, should adhere to our Party as closely as possible. But it would be Manilovism¹⁷ and *khvostism* to think that at any time under capitalism the entire class, or almost the entire class, would be able to rise to the level of consciousness and activity of its vanguard, of its Social-Democratic Party. No sensible Social-Democrat has ever yet doubted that under capitalism even the trade union organizations (which are more primitive and more comprehensible to the undeveloped strata) are unable to embrace the entire, or almost the entire, working class. To forget the distinction between the vanguard and the whole of the masses which gravitate towards it, to for-

get the constant duty of the vanguard to *raise* ever wider strata to this most advanced level, means merely to deceive oneself, to shut one's eyes to the immensity of our tasks, and to narrow down these tasks. And it is just such a shutting of one's eyes, it is just such forgetfulness, to obliterate the difference between those who associate and those who belong, between those who are conscious and active and those who only help.

To argue that we are the party of a class *in justification* of organizational vagueness, *in justification* of confusing organization with disorganization is to repeat the mistake of Nadezhdin, who confused "the philosophical and social-historical question of the 'depth' of the 'roots' of the movement with the technical and organizational question." (*What Is To Be Done?*, p 91) It is this confusion, wrought by the deft hand of Comrade 'Axelrod, that was then repeated dozens of times by the speakers who defended Comrade Martov's formulation "The more widespread the title of Party member, the better," said Martov, without explaining, however, what would be the advantage of a widespread *title* which did not correspond to fact. Can it be denied that control over Party members who do not belong to an organization is a mere fiction? A widespread fiction is not beneficial, but harmful "We could only rejoice if every striker, every demonstrator, answering for his

actions, could proclaim himself a Party member." (P 239) Is that so? *Every striker* should have the right to *proclaim himself a Party member*? In this statement Comrade Martov at once carries his mistake to the point of absurdity, by *lowering* Social-Democracy to the level of mere strike-making, thereby repeating the misadventures of the Akimovs. We could only rejoice if the Social-Democrats succeeded in directing every strike, for it is their immediate and unquestionable duty to direct every manifestation of the class struggle of the proletariat, and strikes are one of the most profound and most powerful manifestations of that struggle. But we would be *khvostists* if we were to *identify* this primary form of struggle, which *ipso facto* is no more than a trade-unionist form, with the all-round and conscious Social-Democratic struggle. We would be opportunistically *legitimatizing a patent falsehood* if we were to allow every striker the right "to proclaim himself a Party member," for *in the majority of cases* such a "proclamation" would be *false*. We would be consoling ourselves with complacent daydreaming if we were to attempt to assure ourselves and others that *every striker* can be a Social-Democrat and a member of the Social-Democratic Party, in face of that infinite disunity, oppression and stultification which under capitalism is bound to weight down upon such very broad strata of the "untrained," unskilled work-

ers It is this very example of the "*striker*" that brings out with particular clarity the difference between the *revolutionary striving* to direct every strike in Social-Democratic fashion and the *opportunist phrasemongering* which proclaims *every* striker a Party member. We are the Party of a class inasmuch as we *in fact* direct almost the entire, or even the entire, proletarian class in Social-Democratic fashion; but only the Akimovs can conclude from this that we must *in word* identify the Party and the class.

"I am not afraid of a conspiratorial organization," said Comrade Martov in this same speech; but, he added, "for me a conspiratorial organization has meaning only when it is enveloped by a broad Social-Democratic Labour Party" (P. 239) He should have said to be exact: when it is enveloped by a broad Social-Democratic working-class *movement*. And in that form Comrade Martov's proposition would have been not only indisputable, but a direct truism I dwell on this point only because subsequent speakers turned Comrade Martov's truism into the very *common and very vulgar* argument that Lenin wants "to confine the sum total of Party members to the sum total of conspirators." This conclusion, which can only evoke a smile, was drawn both by Comrade Posadovsky and by Comrade Popov, and when it was taken up by Martynov and Akimov its true character as an opportunist phrase

became perfectly clear. Today Comrade Axelrod is developing this same argument in the new *Iskra* in order to acquaint the reading public with the new editorial board's new views on organization. Already at the Congress, at the very first sitting where the question of §1 was discussed, I remarked that our opponents wanted to avail themselves of this cheap weapon, and therefore issued the warning in my speech (p. 240): "It should not be thought that Party organizations must consist solely of professional revolutionaries. We need the most diversified organizations of every type, rank and shade, from extremely narrow and secret organizations to very broad, free, *lose Organisationen*." This is such an apparent and self-evident truth that I considered it unnecessary to dwell upon it. But today, when we have been dragged back in so very many respects, one has to "repeat back lessons" on this subject too. In order to do so, I will quote certain passages from *What Is To Be Done?* and from *A Letter to a Comrade*.

"... A circle of heroes like Alexeyev and Myshkin, Khalturin and Zhelyabov is capable of coping with political tasks in the genuine and most practical sense of the term, and it is capable of coping with them precisely because and to the extent that their passionate preaching meets with response among the spontaneously awakening masses, and their seething energy is answered

and supported by the energy of the revolutionary class" In order to be a Social-Democratic *party*, we must win the *support* precisely of the *class* It is not that the Party should envelop the conspiratorial organization, as Comrade Martov thought, but that the revolutionary class, the proletariat, should envelop the Party, the latter to include both conspiratorial and non-conspiratorial organizations

" The workers' organizations for the economic struggle should be trade union organizations Every Social-Democratic worker should as far as possible assist and actively work in these organizations. But it is not at all to our interest to demand that only Social-Democrats should be eligible for membership in the trade unions that would only narrow down our influence over the masses. Let every worker who understands the need to unite for the struggle against the employers and the government join the trade unions The very aim of the trade unions would be unattainable if they failed to unite all who have attained at least this elementary degree of understanding, and if they were not very *wide* organizations And the wider these organizations are, the wider our influence over them will be—an influence due not only to the 'spontaneous' development of the economic struggle but also to the direct and conscious effort of the socialist trade union members to influence

their comrades " (P. 86) By the way, the example of the trade unions is particularly significant for an assessment of the controversial question of §1 That these unions *should* work "under the control and direction" of the Social-Democratic organizations, of that there can be no two opinions among Social-Democrats But to confer, *on this basis*, on all members of trade unions the right to "proclaim themselves" members of the Social-Democratic Party would be an obvious absurdity and would constitute a double menace on the one hand, of *narrowing* the dimensions of the trade union movement and thus weakening the solidarity of the workers, and, on the other, of opening the door of the Social-Democratic Party to vagueness and vacillation. The German Social-Democrats had occasion to solve a similar problem in a practical instance, in the celebrated case of the Hamburg bricklayers working on piece rates ¹⁸ The Social-Democrats did not hesitate for a moment to declare that Social-Democrats regard strikebreaking as dishonourable, that is, to acknowledge that it was *their* vital duty to direct strikes and to support them; but at the same time they just as resolutely rejected the demand to identify the interests of the Party with the interests of the trade unions and to *lay the responsibility on the Party* for the individual acts of individual trade unions The Party should and will strive to inspire the trade unions with its

spirit and to bring them under its influence, but just in order to bring them under its influence it must distinguish the fully Social-Democratic elements in these unions (elements belonging to the Social-Democratic Party) from the elements that are not fully conscious and politically not fully active, and not confuse the two, as Comrade Axelrod would have us do

"... The centralization of the most secret functions in an organization of revolutionaries will not diminish, but rather increase the extent and quality of the activity of a large number of other organizations which are intended for a broad public and are therefore as loose and as non-secret as possible, such as workers' trade unions, workers' self-education circles and circles for reading illegal literature, socialist and also democratic circles among *all* other sections of the population, etc., etc. We must have such circles, trade unions and organizations everywhere in *as large a number as possible* and with the widest variety of functions, but it would be absurd and dangerous to *confuse* them with the organization of *revolutionaries*, to obliterate the border line between them ..." (P. 96) This quotation shows how out of place it was of Comrade Martov to remind me that the organization of revolutionaries should be *enveloped* by broad organizations of workers. I had already pointed this out in *What Is To Be Done?*—and in *A Letter to a*

Comrade I developed this idea more concretely. Factory circles, I wrote there, "are particularly important to us after all, the main strength of the movement lies in the organization of the workers in the *large* mills, for the large mills (and factories) contain the predominant part of the working class, not only as to numbers but even more as to influence, development and fighting capacity. Every factory must be our fortress . . . The factory sub-committee should endeavour to embrace the whole factory, the largest possible number of the workers, by a network of all kinds of circles (or agents) . . . All groups, circles, sub-committees, etc, should enjoy the status of committee institutions, or branches of a committee. Some of them will openly announce their wish to join the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party and, *if endorsed* by the committee, will join the Party, will take upon themselves definite functions (on the instructions of, or in agreement with, the committee), will undertake to obey the orders of the Party organs, *will receive the same rights as all Party members*, will be regarded as immediate candidates for membership in the committee, etc. Others *will not join* the R S D L P and will have the status of circles formed by Party members or associated with one or other Party group, etc" (Pp 17-18) The words I have underscored make it particularly clear that the *idea* of my formulation of §1 was

already fully expressed in *A Letter to a Comrade*. There the conditions for joining the Party are directly indicated, namely 1) a certain degree of organization, and 2) the endorsement of a Party committee. A page later I roughly indicate also what groups and organizations should (or should not) be admitted to the Party, and for what reasons: "Groups of literature distributors should belong to the R.S.D.L.P. and know a certain number of its members and functionaries. A group for the study of labour conditions and for the drawing up of trade union demands need not necessarily belong to the R.S.D.L.P. A group of students, officers or office employees engaged in self-education *in conjunction with* one or two Party members should in some cases not even be aware that these belong to the Party, etc" (Pp. 18-19)

There you have additional material on the subject of the "open vizio"! Whereas the formula of Comrade Martov's draft does not even touch on the relations between the Party and organizations, I had pointed out nearly a year before the Congress that some organizations should belong to the Party and others not. In *A Letter to a Comrade* the idea I advocated at the Congress was already clearly outlined. The matter might be put graphically in the following way. Depending on degree of organization in general and degree of secrecy of organization in particu-

lar, roughly the following categories may be distinguished 1) organizations of revolutionaries, 2) organizations of workers as broad and as varied as possible. (I confine myself to the working class, taking it as self-evident that, under certain conditions, certain elements of other classes will also be included here) These two categories constitute the Party Further, 3) organizations of workers which are associated with the Party; 4) organizations of workers which are not associated with the Party but actually submit to its control and direction; 5) unorganized elements of the working class who also come partly under the direction of the Social-Democratic Party, at any rate during the big manifestations of the class struggle. That, approximately, is how the matter presents itself to me. From the point of view of Comrade Martov, on the contrary, the border line of the Party remains absolutely vague, for "every striker" may "proclaim himself a Party member." What is the use of this vagueness? A widespread "title" Its harm is that it introduces a *disorganizing* idea, the confusing of class and Party

In illustration of the general propositions we have adduced, let us take a cursory glance at the subsequent discussion of §1 at the Congress Comrade Brouckère (to the satisfaction of Comrade Martov) pronounced himself in favour of my formulation, but *his* alliance with me, it ap-

pears, in contradistinction to Comrade Akimov's alliance with Martov, was based on a misunderstanding. Comrade Brouckère did "not agree with the Rules as a whole, nor with their entire spirit" (p. 239) and defended my formulation *as the basis of the democracy* which the supporters of the *Rabocheye Dyelo* desire. Comrade Brouckère had not yet risen to the view that in a political struggle it is sometimes necessary to choose the *lesser evil*; Comrade Brouckère did not realize that it was useless to advocate democracy at a Congress like ours. Comrade Akimov was more perspicacious. He put the question quite rightly when he admitted that "Comrades Martov and Lenin are arguing as to which" (formulation) "would best achieve their common aim" (p. 252) "Brouckère and I," he continued, "want to choose the one *which will least achieve that aim*. From this angle I choose Martov's formulation." And Comrade Akimov frankly explained that he considered "their very aim" (that is, the aim of Plekhanov, Martov and myself, namely, the creation of a directing organization of revolutionaries) "impracticable and harmful"; like Comrade Martynov,² he advocated the idea of the Economists that "an organization of revolutionaries" was

² Comrade Martynov, however, was anxious to draw a distinction between himself and Comrade Akimov, he was anxious to show that conspiratorial does not mean secret, that behind the two different words were concealed

unnecessary. He was "imbued with the belief that in the end the realities of life will force their way into our Party organization, irrespective of whether you bar their path with Martov's formulation or with Lenin's." It would not be worth while dwelling on this *khvostist* conception of the "realities of life" if we did not encounter it in the case of Comrade Martov too. In general, Comrade Martov's second speech (p. 245) is so interesting as to be worth examining in detail.

Comrade Martov's first argument—control by the Party organizations over Party members not belonging to them—is practicable, inasmuch as, having assigned a function to somebody, the committee will be able to watch it" (p. 245). This thesis is remarkably characteristic, for it "betrays," if one may say so, *who* needs Martov's formulation and *whom* it will serve in *actual fact*—freelance intellectuals or workers' groups and the worker masses. The fact is that two interpretations of Martov's formulation are pos-

two different concepts. What the difference is, was explained neither by Comrade Martynov nor by Comrade Axelrod, who is now following in his footsteps. Comrade Martynov tried to "make out" that I had not—for example in *What Is To Be Done?* (as well as in the *Tasks*)—resolutely declared my opposition to "confining the political struggle to a conspiracy." Comrade Martynov was anxious to have his hearers *forget* that the people I was combating *did not see* any necessity for an *organization of revolutionaries*, just as Comrade Akimov does not see it now.

sible: 1) that anyone who renders the Party regular personal assistance under the direction of one of its organizations is entitled "*to proclaim himself*" (Comrade Martov's own words) a Party member; 2) that every Party organization is *entitled to regard* anyone as a Party member who renders it regular personal assistance under its direction. It is only the first interpretation that really gives "every striker" the opportunity to call himself a Party member, and therefore *it alone* immediately won the hearts of the Liebers, Akimovs and Martynovs. But it is obvious that this interpretation is but a phrase, because it would apply to the entire working class, and the difference between Party and class would be obliterated, control over and direction of "every striker" can only be spoken of "symbolically." That is why, in his second speech, Comrade Martov at once slipped into the second interpretation (even though, be it said in parenthesis, *it was directly rejected by the Congress* when it turned down Kostich's resolution—p. 255), namely, that a committee would assign functions and watch the way they were carried out. Of course, no such special assignments would ever be made to the *mass* of the workers, to the *thousands* of proletarians (of whom Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martynov spoke)—they would frequently be given precisely to those *professors* whom Comrade Axelrod mentioned, to

those *high-school students* for whom Comrade Lieber and Comrade Popov were so concerned (p 241), and to the *revolutionary youth* to whom Comrade Axelrod referred in his second speech (p 242). In a word, Comrade Martov's formula would either remain a dead letter, an empty phrase, or it would be of benefit mainly and almost exclusively to "*intellectuals who are thoroughly imbued with bourgeois individualism*" and who do not wish to join the organization. Martov's formulation *ostensibly* defends the interests of the broad strata of the proletariat, but *in fact*, it serves the interests of the *bourgeois intellectuals*, who fight shy of proletarian discipline and organization. No one will undertake to deny that it is *precisely its individualism* and incapacity for discipline and organization that in general distinguishes *the intelligentsia as a separate stratum* of modern capitalist society (cf, for example, Kautsky's well-known articles on the intelligentsia). This, incidentally, is a feature which unfavourably distinguishes this social stratum from the proletariat, it is one of the reasons for the flabbiness and instability of the intellectual, which the proletariat so often feels, and this trait of the intelligentsia is intimately bound up with its customary mode of life, its mode of earning a livelihood, which in a great many respects approximates to the *petty-bourgeois mode of existence* (working in isolation or in very

small groups, etc). Lastly, it is not fortuitous that the defenders of Comrade Martov's formulation were the ones who were obliged to cite the example of professors and high-school students! It was not the champions of a broad proletarian struggle who, in the controversy over §1, took the field against the champions of a radically conspiratorial organization as Comrades Martynov and Axelrod thought, but the supporters of *bourgeois-intellectual individualism*, who clashed with the supporters of *proletarian organization and discipline*

Comrade Popov said "Everywhere, in St. Petersburg as in Nikolayev or Odessa, as the representatives from these towns testify, there are dozens of workers who are distributing literature and carrying on word-of-mouth agitation but who cannot be members of an organization. They may be assigned to an organization, but they cannot be regarded as members " (P. 241) Why they cannot be members of an organization remains Comrade Popov's secret. I have already quoted the passage from *A Letter to a Comrade* showing that the admission of all such workers (by the hundred, not the dozen) to an organization is both possible and essential, and, moreover, that a great many of these organizations can and should belong to the Party.

Comrade Martov's second argument "In Lenin's opinion there should be no organizations

in the Party other than Party organizations " Quite true! . "In my opinion, on the contrary, such organizations should exist. Life creates and breeds organizations quicker than we can include them in the hierarchy of our militant organization of professional revolutionaries . " That is untrue in two respects 1) The number of effective organizations of revolutionaries that "life" breeds is far less than we need and the working-class movement requires, 2) our Party should be a hierarchy not only of organizations of revolutionaries, but of a mass of workers' organizations as well. . "Lenin thinks that the Central Committee will confer the title of Party organization only on such as are fully reliable in the matter of principles But Comrade Brouckère understands very well that life" (*sic*!) "will claim its own and that the Central Committee, in order not to leave a multiplicity of organizations outside the Party, will have to legitimize them despite their not quite reliable character; that is why Comrade Brouckère associates himself with Lenin " What a *khvostist* conception of "life"! Of course, if the Central Committee *had absolutely* to consist of people who were guided not by their own opinions, but by what others might say (see the O C incident), then "life" would "claim its own" in the sense that the most backward elements of the Party would gain the upper hand (*as has transpired now when backward*

elements make up the Party "minority"). But no intelligent reason can be cited which would induce a sensible Central Committee to admit "unreliable" elements to the Party. By this very reference to "life," which "breeds" unreliable elements, Comrade Martov patently revealed the opportunist character of his plan of organization! ... "But I think," he continued, "that if such an organization" (one that is not quite reliable) "is prepared to accept the Party program and Party control, we may admit it to the Party without thereby making it a Party organization. I would consider it a great triumph for our Party, if, for example, some union of 'independents' were to declare that they accept the views of Social-Democracy and its program and wanted to join the Party; which does not mean, however, that we would include the union in a Party organization. . ." Such is the muddle Martov's formulation leads to: non-Party organizations belonging to the Party! Only picture *his* scheme the Party=1) an organization of revolutionaries, +2) organizations of workers recognized as Party organizations, +3) organizations of workers not recognized as Party organizations (consisting principally of "independents"), +4) individuals performing various functions—professors, high-school students, etc., +5) "every striker." Alongside of this remarkable plan one can only put the words of Com-

rade Lieber: "Our task is not only to organize an organization (11); we can and should organize a party." (P. 241.) Yes, of course, we can and should do this, but what it requires is not meaningless words about "organizing organizations," but the *plain demand* that Party members should work to create an *organization* in fact. He who talks about "organizing a party" and yet defends the use of the word party to screen disorganization and disunity of every kind is just indulging in empty jabber.

"Our formulation," Comrade Martov said, "expresses the desire to have a series of organizations standing between the organization of revolutionaries and the masses." It does not. Martov's formulation does *not express* this truly essential desire, for it *does not offer a stimulus to organization*, does not contain a demand for organization, and does not separate the organized from the unorganized. All it offers is a title*

* At the League Congress, Comrade Martov adduced one more argument in support of his formulation, an argument that only deserves to be laughed at. "We might point out," he said, "that, taken literally, Lenin's formulation excludes the *agents of the Central Committee* from the Party, for they do not constitute an organization." (P. 59) Even at the League Congress this argument was greeted with *laughter*, as the minutes record. Comrade Martov opines that the "difficulty" he mentions can only be solved by including the agents of the Central Committee in "the organization of the Central Committee." But that is not the point. The point is that Comrade Martov's example clearly shows that *he completely fails to un-*

and in this connection we cannot but recall Comrade Axelrod's words: "no decree can forbid them" (circles of revolutionary youth and the like) "and individuals to call themselves Social-Democrats" (a sacred truth!) "and even to regard themselves as part of the Party. . . ." There he is *absolutely wrong!* You cannot, and there is *no need*, to forbid anyone to call himself a Social-Democrat, for in its *direct* sense this word only signifies a system of convictions, and not definite organizational relations. As to forbidding indi-

derstand the idea of §1, it was a sheer specimen of pedantic criticism that really deserved to be laughed at. *Formally speaking*, all that would be required would be to form an "organization of agents of the Central Committee," pass a *resolution* to include it in the Party, and the "difficulty" which caused Comrade Martov so much brainracking would vanish immediately. *The idea of §1* as formulated by me consists in the *stimulus* to organize, in *the guarantee of real control* and direction. From the viewpoint of the *essence* of the matter, it is ridiculous even to raise the question whether the agents of the Central Committee will enter the Party, for *real control* over them is fully and unconditionally guaranteed *by the very fact that they have been appointed agents* and by the very fact that they are kept on as agents. Consequently, here there can be no question of any muddling of organized and unorganized (which is the root mistake in Comrade Martov's formulation). Why Comrade Martov's formulation is no good is because anyone, any opportunist, any wind-bag, any "professor" and any "high-school student" can *proclaim himself* a Party member. It is in vain for Comrade Martov to try to *talk away the Achilles' heel* of his formulation by examples in which there can be no question of anybody arbitrarily styling himself a member, of proclaiming himself a member.

vidual circles and persons "to regard themselves as part of the Party," that can and should be done when such circles and persons injure the Party, corrupt it and disorganize it. It would be absurd to speak of the *Party* as a whole, as a political magnitude, if it could not "forbid by decree" a circle to "regard itself as part" of the whole! What otherwise would be the point of defining the procedure and conditions of expulsion from the Party? Comrade Axelrod reduced Comrade Martov's fundamental mistake to an obvious absurdity, he even elevated this mistake to an *opportunist theory* when he added: "In Lenin's formulation, §1 is a direct contradiction in principle to the very nature (1) and aims of the Social-Democratic Party of the proletariat " (P 243) This means no more and no less than that to make higher demands of the Party than of the class is contradictory in principle to the very nature of the aims of the proletariat. It is not surprising that Akimov was heart and soul in favour of such a *theory*

It should be said in fairness that Comrade Axelrod, who *now* desires to convert this mistaken formulation, one obviously tending towards opportunism, into the germ of *new* views, at the Congress, on the contrary, expressed a readiness to "bargain," by saying. "But I observe that I am hammering at an open door."... (I observe this also in the new *Iskra*) . "because Comrade

Lenin, with his peripheral circles which are to be regarded as part of the Party organization, goes out to meet my demand. . . ." (And not only with the peripheral circles, but with every kind of workers' union: cf. p. 242 of the *Minutes*, the speech of Comrade Strakhov, and the passages from *What Is To Be Done?* and *Letter to a Comrade* quoted above) "There still remain the individuals, but here, too, we could bargain." I replied to Comrade Axelrod that, generally speaking, I was not averse to bargaining, and I must now explain in what sense this was meant. As regards the individuals—all those professors, high-school students, etc—I should be inclined least of all to make concessions; but if doubts were raised about the workers' organizations, I would have agreed (despite the utter lack of foundation for such doubts, as I have proved above) to add to my §1 a note to the following effect: "As large a number as possible of workers' organizations which accept the Program and Rules of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party should be included among the Party organizations." Strictly speaking, of course, the place for such a wish is not in the Rules, which should be confined to legal definitions, but in explanatory commentaries and pamphlets (and I have already pointed out that I gave such explanations in my pamphlets long before the Rules were drawn up); but, at least, such a note would

not contain even a shadow of *wrong* ideas capable of leading to disorganization, not a shadow of the *opportunist* arguments¹ and "*anarchist conceptions*" that are undoubtedly a part of Comrade Martov's formulation

The latter expression, given by me in quotation marks, belongs to Comrade Pavlovich, who

¹ To this category of arguments, which inevitably arise when attempts are made to justify Martov's formulation, belongs, in particular, Comrade Trotsky's statement (pp 248 and 346) that "opportunism is created by more complex (or is determined by more profound) causes than one or another clause in the Rules, it is brought about by the relative level of development of the bourgeois democracy and the proletariat." The point is not that clauses in the Rules may produce opportunism, the point is to forge with the help of the Rules a more or less trenchant weapon against opportunism. The profounder its causes, the more trenchant should this weapon be. Therefore, to *justify* a formulation which opens the door to opportunism by the fact that opportunism has "profound causes" is *khvoostism* of the purest water. When Comrade Trotsky was opposed to Comrade Lieber, he understood that the Rules constituted the "organized distrust" of the whole towards the part, of the vanguard towards the backward detachment, but when Comrade Trotsky himself proved to be on Comrade Lieber's side, he forgot this and even began to justify the *weakness* and instability of *our* organization of this distrust (distrust of opportunism) by talking about "complex causes," the "level of development of the proletariat," etc. Here is another of Trotsky's arguments: "It is much easier for the intellectual youth, organized in one way or another, to *enter themselves* (my italics) on the rolls of the Party." Just so. That is why it is the formulation by which even unorganized elements may *proclaim themselves* Party members that suffers from the vagueness typical of the intellectual, and not my formulation which

quite justly characterized as *anarchism* the recognition of "irresponsible and self-styled Party members." "Translated into simple language," said Comrade Pavlovich, explaining my formulation to Comrade Lieber, "it means. 'if you want to be a Party member you must recognize organizational relations, too, and not only platonical-removes the right to "enter oneself" on the rolls Comrade Trotsky says that if the Central Committee were "not to recognize" an organization of opportunists it would only be because of the character of certain persons, and that once these persons were known as political individuals they would not be dangerous and could be removed by a general Party boycott. This is only true of cases when people have to be removed from the Party (and only half true at that, because an organized party removes members by a vote and not by a boycott). It is absolutely untrue of the far more frequent cases when removal would be absurd, and when all that is required is control. For purposes of control, the Central Committee might, on certain conditions, deliberately admit to the Party an organization which was not quite reliable but which was capable of working, it might do so with the object of testing it, of trying to direct it into the true path, of correcting its partial aberrations by its own guidance, etc. This would not be dangerous if in general "self-entering" on the Party rolls were not allowed. It would often be useful for an open and responsible, controlled expression (and discussion) of mistaken views and mistaken tactics. "But if legal definitions are to correspond to actual relations, Comrade Lenin's formulation must be rejected," said Comrade Trotsky, and again he spoke like an opportunist. Actual relations are not a dead thing, they live and develop. Legal definitions may correspond to the progressive development of these relations, but they may also (if these definitions are bad ones) "correspond" to retrogression or stagnation. The latter is the "case" with Comrade Martov

ly.' " Simple though this "translation" was, it was, however, not superfluous (as events after the Congress demonstrated), not only for all manner of dubious professors and high-school students, but also for bona-fide Party members, for persons on top .. With no less justice, Comrade Pavlovich pointed to the contradiction between Comrade Martov's formulation and the indisputable precept of scientific Socialism which Comrade Martov quoted so unhappily "Our Party is the conscious spokesman of an unconscious process " Exactly. And for this very reason it is wrong to want "every striker" to have the right to call himself a Party member, for if "every striker" were not only a spontaneous expression of a powerful class instinct and of the class struggle, which is inevitably leading to the social revolution, but a *conscious expression* of that process, then . the general strike would not be anarchist phrasemongering, then our Party would forthwith and at once *embrace* the whole working class, and, consequently, would at once put an end to the *entire bourgeois society* If it is to be a conscious spokesman *in fact*, the Party must be able to work out such organizational relations as will *ensure a definite level* of consciousness, and systematically raise this level. "If we go the way of Martov," Comrade Pavlovich said, "we must first of all delete the clause on accepting the *program*, for before a program

can be accepted it must be mastered and understood.... Acceptance of the program presupposes a fairly high level of political consciousness." We will never permit that *support* of Social-Democracy, *participation* in the struggle it is directing, be artificially *restricted* by any demand (mastery, understanding, and the rest), for this *participation* itself, its very manifestation, *promotes* both consciousness and the instinct for organization; but inasmuch as we have *joined together in a party* in order to carry on systematic work, we must see to it that it is systematic.

That Comrade Pavlovich's warning regarding the program was not superfluous became apparent *at once*, in the course of *that very same* sitting Comrades Akimov and Lieber, who got Comrade Martov's formulation carried,¹ *at once* betrayed their true nature by demanding (pp 254-55) that as regards the program too all that was required (for "membership" in the Party) was platonic recognition, recognition only of its "bas-

¹ The vote was 28 for and 22 against. Of the eight anti-*Iskra*-ists, seven were for Martov and one for me. Without the aid of the opportunists, Comrade Martov would not have carried through his opportunist formulation. (At the League Congress Comrade Martov very unsuccessfully endeavoured to refute this undoubted fact, for some reason confining himself to the votes of the Bundists, and forgetting about Comrade Akimov and his friends—or rather remembering them *only* when this could be used as evidence against me. Comrade Brouckère's agreement with me.)

ic principles." "Comrade Akimov's proposal is quite logical from Comrade Marlov's standpoint," Comrade Pavlovich remarked. Unfortunately, we cannot see from the minutes *how many* votes this proposal (Akimov's) secured—in all probability, not less than seven (five Bundists, Akimov and Brouckère). And it was the withdrawal of *seven* delegates from the Congress that converted the "compact majority" (anti-*Iskra*-ists, "Centrists" and Martovists) which had begun to form over §1 of the Rules into a compact minority! It was precisely the withdrawal of *seven* delegates that brought about the defeat of the motion to confirm the old editorial board—which is supposed to be a howling violation of "continuity" in the *Iskra* editorship! It is queer that these *seven* should have been the sole salvation and guarantee of the *Iskra* "continuity," consisting as they did of the Bundists, Akimov and Brouckère, that is, the very delegates who voted against the *mottos* for recognizing the *Iskra* as the central organ, the very delegates whose opportunism was admitted dozens of times by the Congress, and admitted in particular by Martov and Plekhanov on the question of *toning down* §1 in reference to the program. The "continuity" of the *Iskra* safeguarded by the anti-*Iskra*-ists!—this brings us to the *unfolding* of the post-Congress tragicomedy.

* * *

The grouping of votes over paragraph one of the Rules revealed a phenomenon of exactly the same type as the quality of languages episode the falling away of one-quarter (approximately) of the *Iskra*-ist majority made possible the victory of the anti-*Iskra*-ists, who were backed by the "Centre." Of course, here too there were individual votes which disturbed the full symmetry of the picture—in so large an assembly as our Congress, it is inevitable that a part should be "strays" who quite fortuitously swing from one side to the other, especially on a question like §1 where the true character of the divergence was only just becoming discernible and many delegates had simply *not yet found their bearings* (considering that the question had not been discussed beforehand in the press). Five votes fell away from the *Iskra*-ist majority (Russov and Karsky with two votes each, and Lensky with one vote), on the other hand, they were joined by one anti-*Iskra*-ist (Brouckère) and three from the Centre (Medvedyev, Egorov and Tsaryov), the result was a total of 23 votes (24 — 5 + 4), one vote less than the final grouping in the elections *It was the anti-"Iskra"-ists who gave Martov the majority*, seven of them voting for him and one for me (of the "Centre" too, seven voted for Martov, and three for me). The coalition of the *Iskra*-ist minority with the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Centre," which formed a

compact minority at the end of the Congress and after the Congress, *was beginning to take shape*. The political error of Martov and Axelrod, who *undoubtedly took a step towards opportunism and anarchist individualism* in the formulation of §1, and especially in their defence of that formulation, was revealed at once and very clearly thanks to the free and open arena offered by the Congress; it revealed itself in the fact that the least stable elements, the least consistent in principle, at once brought up all their forces to widen the fissure, the breach, that appeared in the views of the revolutionary Social-Democrats. The fact that people who frankly pursued *different aims* (see Akimov's speech) in matters of organization were working in concert at the Congress, at once impelled those who were *in principle* opposed to our plan of organization and our Rules to support the error of Comrades Martov and Axelrod. The *Iskra*-ists who remained faithful to the views of revolutionary Social-Democracy on this question too found themselves *in the minority*. This is a circumstance of *the utmost importance*, for unless it is understood it is absolutely impossible to understand either the struggle over particular points of the Rules, or the struggle over the personal composition of the Central Organ and of the Central Committee.

J. INNOCENT SUFFERERS FROM A FALSE ACCUSATION OF OPPORTUNISM

Before proceeding to the subsequent discussion on the Rules, it is necessary, in order to elucidate our difference over the personal composition of the central institutions, to touch on the *private* meetings of the *Iskra* organization held during the Congress. The last and most important of these four meetings took place *just after* the vote on §1 of the Rules—and thus the split of the *Iskra* organization which took place at this meeting was in point both of time and logic a precedent condition to the subsequent struggle.

The *Iskra* organization began to hold private meetings* soon after the Organization Committee episode, which furnished an occasion for the

* I already endeavoured at the League Congress to give as concise an account as possible of what took place at the private meetings in order to avoid insoluble disputes. The principal facts are also set forth in my *Letter to the "Iskra" Editorial Board* (p. 4). Comrade Martov made no objection to them in his *Reply*.

discussion of possible candidates for the Central Committee. It stands to reason that, in view of the abolition of imperative mandates, these meetings were purely in the nature of consultations and their decisions were not binding on anyone; but their importance was nevertheless immense. The selection of candidates for the Central Committee was a matter of considerable difficulty to delegates who were not acquainted with the secret names nor with the inner work of the *Iskra* organization, the organization which had brought about actual Party unity and whose leadership of the practical movement served as one of the motives for the official adoption of the *Iskra*. We have already seen that if the *Iskra*-ists had been united, they would have been fully guaranteed a big majority at the Congress, as much as three-fifths, and this was perfectly understood by all the delegates. All the *Iskra*-ists, in fact, expected that the "*Iskra*" organization would make definite recommendations as to the personal composition of the Central Committee, and not a single member of that organization raised any objection to a preliminary discussion within the organization of the composition of the Central Committee; not one of them so much as hinted at endorsing the entire membership of the Organization Committee, that is, converting that body into the Central Committee; nor did any of them hint *even at a conference* with the Organization Committee as

a whole regarding the candidates for the Central Committee This circumstance is also highly significant, and it is extremely important to bear it in mind, for *now, after the event*, the Martovists are zealously defending the Organization Committee, thereby only proving their political spinelessness for the hundredth and thousandth time.* As long as the split over the composition of the central bodies had not led Martov to join forces with the Akimovs, everybody at the Congress clearly realized what every impartial person may easily ascertain from the Congress minutes and from the entire history of the *Iskra*, namely, that the Organization Committee was *mainly* a commission set up to convene the Congress, a commission deliberately composed of representatives of the various shades, including even the Bundists, while the whole brunt of the real work of *creating* the organized unity of the Party was borne by the *Iskra* organization (it should also be remembered that quite by chance *several Iskra-*

* Just reflect on this "picture of morals" a *delegate* from the *Iskra* organization at the Congress confers *only* with it and *does not hunt* even at a conference with the Organization Committee Yet, after his defeat, both in this organization and at the Congress, he begins to *regret* that the Organization Committee was not endorsed, to extol it retrospectively, and with haughty grandeur to ignore the organization that gave him his mandate! It may be safely guaranteed that an analogous instance will not be found in the history of any really Social-Democratic and really workers' party

ists on the Organization Committee were absent from the Congress, either because they had been arrested or because of other circumstances "beyond their control"). The members of the *Iskra* organization present at the Congress have already been enumerated in Comrade Pavlovich's pamphlet (see his *Letter on the Second Congress*, p 13) ¹⁹

The ultimate result of the heated debates in the *Iskra* organization was the two votes I have already mentioned in my *Letter to the Editorial Board*. The first vote "by nine to four, with three abstentions, one of the candidates supported by Martov was rejected." What could be simpler and more natural, one would think, than such a fact by the common consent of all the sixteen members of the *Iskra* organization present at the Congress, the possible candidates are discussed, and one of Comrade Martov's candidates is rejected by the majority (it was Comrade Stein, as Comrade Martov himself has now blurted out—*A State of Siege*, p 69)? After all, one of the reasons why we assembled at the Party Congress was to discuss and decide to whom to entrust the "conductor's baton"—and it was the common Party duty of us all to devote the most serious attention to this item on the agenda, to decide this question from the standpoint of the *interests of the cause*, and not of "philistine compassion," as Comrade Russov quite rightly expressed it

later. Of course, in discussing the candidates *at the Congress*, we were bound to touch upon certain personal qualities, we were bound to express our approval or disapproval, especially at an unofficial and intimate meeting *And I had already warned at the League Congress* that it is absurd to think that a candidate is "disgraced" when he is not approved (*League Minutes*, p. 49), it is absurd to make a "scene" and to go into hysterics over what forms part of the direct duty of a Party member to select officials conscientiously and prudently. And yet it was this that put the fat in the fire as far as our minority is concerned; they began *after the Congress* to howl about "destroyed reputations" (*League Minutes*, p. 70) and to assure *the broad public in print* that Comrade Stein

* Comrade Martov bitterly complained at the League of the rudeness of my disapproval, failing to see that his complaint turns into an argument against himself. Lenin behaved—to use his own expression—frenziedly (*League Minutes*, p. 63). That is so. He banged the door. True. His conduct (at the second or third meeting of the *Iskra* organization) aroused the indignation of the members who remained at the meeting. It did. But what follows? Only that my arguments on the substance of the questions in dispute were convincing and were confirmed by the course of the Congress. For if, after all is said and done, nine of the sixteen members of the *Iskra* organization in the end sided with me, clearly this was so *notwithstanding* and *in spite of* my pernicious rudeness. Hence, had it not been for this "rudeness," perhaps even more than nine would have sided with me. Consequently, the more convincing my arguments and facts were, the more "indignation" they had to overcome.

was the "chief figure" in the former Organization Committee and that he had been groundlessly accused of "diabolical schemes" (*A State of Siege*, p. 69). Is it not hysterical to shout about "destroyed reputations" in connection with the approval or disapproval of candidates? Is it not squabbling when people who have suffered defeat both at a private meeting of the *Iskra* organization and at the official, supreme assembly of the Party, the Congress, begin to complain to all and sundry and to recommend rejected candidates to the worthy public as "chief figures," and when they then try to force their candidates upon the Party by causing a split and demanding *co-option*? In the musty atmosphere we live in abroad, our political concepts have become so confused that Comrade Martov is no longer able to distinguish Party duty from ties of circle and friendship! It is bureaucracy and formalism, we are to believe, to think it appropriate to discuss and decide upon candidates *only* at congresses, where delegates assemble primarily for the discussion of important questions of principle, where representatives of the movement assemble who are able to treat the question of personalities impartially, and who are able (and obliged) to *demand* and to gather all necessary information about the candidates so as to enable them to cast their decisive votes, and where the assignment of a certain place to disputes over the conductor's

baton is natural and essential. Instead of this bureaucratic and formal view, new habits and customs have now become the thing we are, after congresses, to talk right and left about the political burial of Ivan Ivanovich, or the destroyed reputation of Ivan Nikiforovich; writers are to recommend candidates in pamphlets, and to beat their breasts and pharisaically assert: "This is not a circle, it is a party." Those of the reading public who have a taste for scandal will greedily swallow the sensational news that, on the assurance of Martov himself,* so-and-so was the chief figure on the Organization Committee. This reading public is far more able to discuss and decide the question than formalistic institutions like congresses, with their grossly mechanical decisions by majority vote. Yes, our real Party workers still have big Augean stables of squabbling to clean up abroad.

Second vote of the *Iskra* organization "by ten to two, with four abstentions, a list of five

* I, too, like Martov, tried in the *Iskra* organization to get a candidate nominated to the Central Committee and failed, a candidate of whose splendid reputation before and at the beginning of the Congress, as borne out by unique facts, I too might speak. But it does not even enter my head. This comrade *has sufficient self-respect not to allow* anybody, after the Congress, to nominate him in print or to complain about political burials, destroyed reputations, etc.

(candidates for the Central Committee) was adopted which, on my proposal, included one leader of the non-*Iskra*-ists elements and one leader of the *Iskra*-ist minority" This vote is of the utmost importance, for it clearly and irrefutably proves the utter falsity of the fables which were built up later, in the atmosphere of squabbling, to the effect that we wanted to eject the non-*Iskra*-ists from the Party or to remove them or that the candidates of the majority were elected by only one half of the Congress from among one half of the Congress, etc All this is sheer falsehood The vote I have cited shows that we did not remove the non-*Iskra*-ists even from the Central Committee, let alone the Party, and that we allowed our opponents a very substantial *minority* The whole point is that they *wanted to have a majority*, and when this modest wish was not fulfilled, they started a *row* and bluntly refused to be represented on the central bodies That such was the case, Comrade Martov's assertions at the League notwithstanding, is shown by the following *letter* addressed to us, the majority of the *Iskra*-ists (and the majority at the Congress after the seven had withdrawn), by the minority of the *Iskra* organization shortly after the adoption of §1 of the Rules at the Congress (it should be noted that the meeting of the *Iskra* organization to which I have referred was the *last* after it the organization *factually* fell apart, and each

side tried to convince the other Congress delegates that it was in the right).

Here is the text of the letter.

"Having heard the explanation of delegates Sorokin and Sablina²⁰ regarding the wish of the majority of the editorial board and of the Emancipation of Labour group to attend the meeting (on such and such a date),* and having with the help of these delegates established the fact that at the previous meeting a list of Central Committee candidates was read which was supposed to have come from us, and which was used to give a wrong characterization of our whole *political* position, and bearing in mind also that, firstly, this list was attributed to us without any attempt to ascertain its real origin, that, secondly, this circumstance is undoubtedly connected with the accusation of 'opportunism' openly circulated against the majority of the *Iskra* editorial board and of the Emancipation of Labour group; and that, thirdly, the connection between this accusation and the existence of a quite definite plan to *change the composition of the*

* According to my reckoning, the date mentioned in the letter fell on a Tuesday. The meeting took place on Tuesday evening, that is, *after* the 28th sitting of the Congress. This chronological reference is very important. It is a *documentary refutation* of Comrade Martov's opinion that we parted ways over the organization of the central bodies, and not over the question of their personal composition. It is *documentary proof* of the correctness of my statement of the case at the Congress of the League and in the *Letter to the Editorial Board After the 28th sitting* of the Congress, Comrades Martov and Starover had a great deal to say about the false accusation of opportunism, but they *did not say a word* about the differences over the composition of the Council or about co-option to the central bodies (about which we argued at the 25th, 26th and 27th sittings).

'Iskra' editorial board is perfectly clear to us—we therefore consider that the explanation we were given of the reasons for not admitting us to the meeting is unsatisfactory, and that the refusal to admit us to the meeting is proof of an unwillingness to allow us the opportunity to refute the above-mentioned false accusations

"As to the possibility of our reaching an agreement regarding a joint list of candidates for the Central Committee, we declare that the only list we can accept as the basis for agreement is the following Popov, Trotsky and Glebov. Furthermore, we emphasize the nature of this list as a *compromise* list, since the only meaning the inclusion of Comrade Glebov in the list can have is as a concession to the wishes of the majority, for now that the role he has played at the Congress is clear to us *we do not consider that Comrade Glebov* answers the demands which should be made of a candidate for the Central Committee

"At the same time, we stress the fact that our entering into negotiations regarding the candidates for the Central Committee has no bearing whatever on the question of the composition of the editorial board of the Central Organ, as we do not agree to enter into any negotiations on this question (the composition of the editorial board)

"On behalf of the comrades,
"Martov and Starover"

This letter, which faithfully reproduces the frame of mind of the disputing sides and the status of the dispute, leads us at once to the "heart" of the incipient split and reveals the real reasons for it. The minority of the *Iskra* organization, having refused to agree with the majority, and preferring freedom of agitation at the Congress (to which, of course, they had a full

right), nevertheless tried to induce the "delegates" of the majority to admit them to their private meeting! Naturally, this amusing demand only met with a smile and a shrug of the shoulders at our meeting (where the letter was of course read), and the outcries, which bordered on hysterics, about the "false accusations of opportunism" evoked outright laughter. But let us first examine Martov's and Starover's bitter complaints point by point.

The list was wrongly attributed to them; their political position was wrongly characterized.—But, as Martov himself admitted (*League Minutes*, p. 64), it never occurred to me to doubt the truth of his statement that he was not the author of the list. Generally, the authorship of the list has nothing to do with the case, and whether the list was drawn up by the *Iskra*-ists, or by one or another of the representatives of the "Centre," etc., is absolutely of no importance. The important thing is that this list, which wholly consisted of members of the present minority, circulated at the Congress, if only as a mere guess or assumption. Lastly, *the most important thing of all* is that at the Congress Comrade Martov *was obliged* to fight tooth and nail to dissociate himself from *such* a list, a list which he *ought* now to greet with delight. Nothing could bring out the instability in the evaluation of people and shades more saliently than this right-about-face in the

course of a couple of months from howling about "slandorous rumours" to forcing on the Party central body the very candidates who figure in this supposedly slanderous list!*

This list, Comrade Martov said at the League Congress, "politically meant a coalition between us and the *Yuzhny Rabochy*, on the one hand, and the Bund, on the other, a coalition in the sense of a *direct agreement*" (p 64) That is not true, for, firstly, the Bund would never have entered into an "agreement" about a list which did not include a single Bundist; and, secondly, there was no *question, nor could there have been*, of a direct agreement (which to Martov seemed disgraceful) even with the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, let alone the Bund. It was not an agreement but a coalition that was in question; not that Comrade Martov had made a deal, but that he *was bound to have the support* of the very anti-*Iskra*-ists and unstable elements whom he had fought during the first part of the Congress and who had seized upon his error over §1 of the Rules. The letter I have quoted proves most incontrovertibly that the *root* of the "insult" did indeed lie in the *open, and moreover false, accusation of opportunism*. The "accusations" which

* These lines were already set up when we received news of the episode of Comrade Gusev and Comrade Deutsch. We shall examine this episode separately in an appendix. (See p. 361.—Ed)

started the whole business and which Comrade Martov is *now* so careful to avoid, in spite of my reminder in the *Letter to the Editorial Board*, were twofold: firstly, during the discussion of §1 of the Rules Plekhanov bluntly declared that §1 was a question of "keeping away" from us "every kind of representative of opportunism," and that my draft, as a bulwark against their invasion of the Party, "should, if only for that reason, be voted for by all enemies of opportunism" (*Congress Minutes*, p. 246). These vigorous words, even though I softened them down a little (p. 250), caused a sensation, which was clearly expressed in the speeches of Comrades Russov (p. 247), Trotsky (p. 248) and Akimov (p. 253). In the "lobby" of our "parliament," Plekhanov's thesis was keenly commented on and varied in a thousand ways in endless disputes over §1. And now, instead of defending the merits of their case, our dear comrades assume a ludicrous air of injury and even go to the length of complaining in writing about a "false accusation of opportunism"!

The narrow circle mentality and the astonishing immaturity as Party members, which cannot stand the fresh breeze of open controversy in the hearing of all, is here clearly revealed. It is the mentality so familiar to the Russian, as expressed in the old saying: either coats off, or let's have your hand! These people are so accustomed

to the bell-jar seclusion of an intimate and snug circle that as soon as one spoke in a free and open arena on his own responsibility they went into a fit. Accusations of opportunism!—and against whom? Against the Emancipation of Labour group, and its majority at that—can you imagine anything more terrible! Either split the Party on account of this ineffaceable insult, or hush up this “domestic unpleasantness” by restoring the “continuity” of the bell-jar—this alternative is already pretty clearly indicated in the letter under consideration. The individualism of the intellectual and the circle mentality clashed with the demand for an open statement to the Party. Can you imagine such an absurdity, such a squabble, such a complaint about “*false* accusations of opportunism” in the German party! There, proletarian organization and discipline weaned them from such intellectual squeamishness long ago. Nobody has anything but the profoundest respect for Liebknecht, let us say; but how they would have laughed over there at *complaints* that he (together with Bebel) was “openly accused of opportunism” at the 1895 congress, when, on the agrarian question, he found himself in the bad company of the notorious opportunist Vollmar and his friends. Liebknecht’s name is intimately bound up with the history of the German working-class movement not, of course, because he happened to stray into op-

portunism on such a comparatively minor and particular question, but in spite of it. And similarly, in spite of all the irritation of the struggle, the name of Comrade Axelrod, say, inspires respect in every Russian Social-Democrat, and always will, but not because Comrade Axelrod happened to defend an opportunist idea at the Second Congress of our Party, happened to dig out the old anarchist rubbish at the Second Congress of the League, but in spite of it. Only the most hidebound circle mentality, with its logic of "either coats off, or let's have your hand" could give rise to hysterics, squabbles, and a Party split because of "a false accusation of opportunism against the majority of the Emancipation of Labour group"

The other reason for this terrible accusation is most intimately connected with the previous one (Comrade Martov carefully tried at the League Congress [p 63] to evade and hush up *one* side of this incident) It relates precisely to that *coalition* of the anti-*Iskra*-ist and wavering elements with Comrade Martov which *began to be discernible* in connection with §1 of the Rules. Naturally, there was no agreement, direct or indirect, between Comrade Martov and the anti-*Iskra*-ists, nor could there have been; nor did anybody suspect him of it: it only seemed so to him in his fright. But *politically* his error was revealed in the fact that people who undoubtedly

gravitated towards opportunism began to form around him an ever more solid and "compact" majority (which has now become a minority *only* because of the "chance" withdrawal of seven delegates) We pointed to this "coalition," also *openly*, of course, immediately after the discussion of §1—both at the Congress (see Comrade Pavlovich's remark already quoted *Congress Minutes*, p 255) and in the *Iskra* organization (Plekhanov, as I recall, pointed to it in particular) It is literally the same remark and the same jibe as was addressed by Zetkin to Bebel and Liebknecht in 1895, when she said "Es tut mir in der Seele weh dass ich dich in der Gesellschaft seh" ("It cuts me to the quick to see you [i.e., Bebel] in such company [i.e., of Vollmar and Co.]") It is strange, to be sure, that Bebel and Liebknecht did not send a hysterical message to Kautsky and Zetkin complaining of a false accusation of opportunism .

As to the list of candidates for the Central Committee, this letter shows that Comrade Martov was mistaken in declaring in the League that the refusal to come to an agreement with us was not yet final—another example of how unwise it is in a political struggle to attempt to reproduce the *spoken word* from memory, instead of relying on documents Actually, the "minority" was so modest as to present an ultimatum to the "majority": take two from the "minority" and one (by

way of compromise and *only* as a concession, properly speaking!) from the "majority"! This is monstrous, but it is a fact. And this fact clearly shows how absurd are the fables now being spread to the effect that a "majority" consisting of one half of the Congress elected representatives from only that half. *Just the opposite* the Martovists offered us one out of three only as a concession, consequently, in the event of our not agreeing to this unique "concession," they wanted to get *all* the seats filled by their own candidates! At our private meeting we had a good laugh at the modesty of the Martovists and drew up a list of our own: Glebov—Travinsky (subsequently elected to the Central Committee)—Popov. We substituted (also at a private meeting of the twenty-four) Comrade Vasilyev (subsequently elected to the Central Committee) for Comrade Popov *only because* the latter refused, first in private conversation and then openly at the Congress (p. 338), to be included in our list.

That is how matters really stood.

The modest "minority" had the modest wish to be in the majority. When this modest wish was not met, the "minority" was pleased to decline altogether and to start a row. Yet there are people who now deign to talk majestically about the "uncompromising spirit" of the "majority"!

Entering the fray in the arena of free agitation at the Congress, the "minority" presented

the "majority" with amusing ultimatums Having suffered defeat, *our heroes fell a-weeping and began to shout about a state of siege* Voilà tout

The terrible accusation that we intended to change the composition of the editorial board was also greeted by us with a smile (at the private meeting of the twenty-four) from the very beginning of the Congress, and even before the Congress, everybody was perfectly well aware of the plan to *renovate* the editorial board by electing an initial trio (I shall speak of this in greater detail when I come to the election of the editorial board at the Congress) That the "minority" took fright at this plan *after* they saw that the coalition of the "minority" and the anti-*Iskra*-ists was a splendid confirmation of its correctness, did not surprise us—it was quite natural Of course we could not take seriously the proposal to convert ourselves into a minority of our own free will, and prior to the fight at the Congress, nor could we take seriously this whole letter, the authors of which had reached such an incredible state of exasperation as to speak of "false accusations of opportunism" We confidently hoped that their sense of Party duty would very soon take the upper hand of the natural desire to "vent their spite"

K CONTINUATION OF THE DISCUSSION OF THE RULES COMPOSITION OF THE COUNCIL

The succeeding clauses of the Rules aroused far more controversy over particular points than over the principles of organization. The 24th sitting of the Congress was entirely devoted to the question of representation at Party congresses, and again a determined and definite struggle against the common plans of all the *Iskra*-ists was waged only by the Bundists (Goldblatt and Lieber, pp 258-59) and Comrade Akimov, who with praiseworthy frankness admitted his role at the Congress. "Every time I speak, I do so in the full consciousness that my arguments will not influence the comrades, but will on the contrary damage the point I am trying to defend" (p. 261). Coming just after §1 of the Rules, this apt remark was particularly appropriate; only the words "on the contrary" were not quite correct in this case, for Comrade Akimov was not only capable of damaging a given point but at the

same time and by doing so of "influencing the comrades" . from among the very inconsistent *Iskra*-ists who were inclined towards opportunist phrasemongering

Well, §3 of the Rules, which defines the conditions of representation at congresses, was adopted by a majority, with seven abstentions (p 263)—anti-*Iskra*-ists, evidently

The dispute over the composition of the Council, which took up the greater part of the 25th sitting of the Congress, revealed an extraordinary number of groupings around an immense quantity of motions Abramson and Tsaryov rejected the plan for a Council altogether Panin insisted on making the Council a court of arbitration exclusively, and therefore quite consistently moved the deletion of the definition of the Council as the supreme institution which may be summoned by any two of its members * Hertz²¹ and Russov advocated various methods of constituting the Council, in addition to the *three* methods proposed by the *five* members of the Rules Commission

* Apparently, Comrade Starover also inclined to the view of Comrade Panin, only with the difference that the latter knew what he wanted and quite consistently moved resolutions which aimed at converting the Council into a pure arbitration or conciliation body, whereas Comrade Starover did not know what he wanted, asserting that the Council, according to the draft, could meet "only on the wish of the parties" (p 266) That is absolutely untrue

The questions in dispute mainly reduced themselves to a definition of the functions of the Council: whether it was to be a court of arbitration or the supreme institution of the Party. Comrade Panin, as I have said, was consistently in favour of the former. But he stood alone. Comrade Martov was vigorously opposed to this: "I propose that the motion to delete the words, 'the Council is the supreme institution,' be rejected. Our formulation" (i.e., the formulation of the functions of the Council on which we had agreed in the Rules Commission) "deliberately leaves open the possibility of the Council developing into the supreme Party institution. For us, the Council is not only a conciliation board." Yet the composition of the Council, as defined in Comrade Martov's draft, bore the character solely and exclusively of a "conciliation board" or court of arbitration: two members from each of the central bodies and a fifth to be invited by these four. Not only such a composition of the Council, but even the one adopted by the Congress on the motion of Comrades Russov and Hertz (the fifth member to be appointed by the Congress), answers the sole purpose of conciliation or mediation. Between such a composition of the Council and its mission of becoming the supreme institution of the Party there lies an irreconcilable contradiction. The composition of the supreme Party institution should be constant and should not depend on

chance changes (sometimes owing to arrests) in the composition of the central bodies. The supreme institution should be in direct contact with the Party Congress, receiving its powers from the latter, and not from the two other Party institutions subordinate to the Congress. The supreme institution should consist of persons known to the Party Congress. Lastly, *the supreme institution* should not be *organized* in such a way as to make *its very existence* dependent on chance—the two bodies fail to agree on the selection of the fifth member, and the Party is left without a supreme institution! The objections made to this were 1) that if one of the five were to abstain and the remaining four were to divide equally, the position might also prove a hopeless one (Egorov). This objection is unfounded, for the impossibility of *adopting a decision* is something that is at times inevitable in the case of *any* body, but that is quite different from the impossibility of *forming* a body. Second objection “if an institution like the Council is incapable of selecting a fifth member, then it is altogether ineffectual” (Zasulich). But the point is not whether it will be effectual, the point is that there will be no *supreme* institution at all without a fifth member, *there could be no Council*, there would be no “*institution*,” and there could be no point in discussing whether it was effectual or not. Lastly, if the trouble were that it might

not be possible to form some Party body over which stands another, higher, body that would be remediable, for in urgent cases the higher body could fill the hiatus in one way or another. But there is *no* body above the Council except the Congress, and therefore to leave in the Rules the possibility of the Council *not even being formed* would obviously be illogical

Both my brief speeches at the Congress on this question were devoted to an examination (pp 267 and 269) of *only these two* wrong objections which Martov and other comrades adduced in defence of his draft. As to whether the Central Organ or the Central Committee should predominate on the Council, *I did not even touch on this question*. It was *first* touched on by Comrade Akimov as early as the 14th sitting of the Congress (p 157), from the viewpoint of the danger that the Central Organ might predominate, and Comrades Martov, Axelrod and others, *after the Congress*, were *only* following in Akimov's footsteps when they invented the absurd and demagogic story that the "majority" wanted to convert the Central Committee into a tool of the editorial board. When he dealt with this question in his *A State of Siege*, Comrade Martov modestly avoided mentioning its real initiator!

Anybody who is desirous of acquainting himself with the *entire* treatment at the Party Congress of the question of the Central Organ

predominating over the Central Committee, and not of contenting himself with isolated quotations torn from their context, will easily perceive how Comrade Martov has distorted the matter *It was none other than Comrade Popov* who, as early as the 14th sitting, started a polemic *against the views of Comrade Akimov*, who wanted "the 'strictest centralization' at the top of the Party in order to weaken the influence of the 'Central Organ'" (p 154, my italics), "which in fact is the whole meaning of this (Akimov's) system" "Far from defending such centralization," Comrade Popov added, "I am prepared to combat it with every means in my power, because it is *the badge of opportunism*" There you have the *root* of the celebrated question of the Central Organ predominating over the Central Committee, and it is not surprising that Comrade Martov is now *obliged* to pass over the true origin of the question in silence Not *even* Comrade Popov could fail to discern the *opportunist* character of Akimov's talk about the predominance of the Central Organ,*

* Neither Comrade Popov nor Comrade Martov hesitated to call Comrade Akimov an opportunist, they only began to take offence and to grow indignant when this appellation was applied to *them*, and applied justly, in connection with "equality of languages" or §1 Comrade Akimov, in whose footsteps Comrade Martov has followed, was however able to conduct himself with greater dignity and manhood at the Party Congress than Comrade Martov and Co at the League Congress "I have been called an

and in order thoroughly to dissociate himself from Comrade Akimov, Comrade Popov *categorically* declared "Let there be three members from the editorial board and two members from the Central Committee on this central body (the Council). *That is a secondary question.* (My italics) The important thing is that the leadership, the supreme leadership of the Party, should proceed from one source" (p. 155). Comrade Akimov objected: "The predominance of the Central Organ on the Council is ensured in the draft by the very fact that the composition of the editorial board is constant whereas that of the Central Committee is changeable" (p. 157)—an argument which relates only to "constancy" of leadership in matters of *principle* (which is a normal and desirable thing), and by no means to "predominance" in the sense of interference or encroachment on independence. And Comrade Popov, who at that time did not yet belong to the "minority," which is screening its dissatisfaction with the composition of the central bodies by gossiping about the lack of independence of the Central Committee, replied to Comrade Aki-

opportunism here," said Comrade Akimov at the Party Congress "I personally consider this an abusive and offensive term and believe that I have done nothing to deserve it. However, I am not protesting" (P. 296) Can it be that Comrades Marlov and Starover invited Comrade Akimov to subscribe to their protest against the false accusation of opportunism, but that Comrade Akimov declined?

mov quite reasonably "I propose that it" (the Council) "be regarded as the leading central body of the Party, in which case *it will be entirely unimportant whether there is a larger number of representatives on the Council from the Central Organ or from the Central Committee*" (pp 157-58, my italics).

When the discussion of the composition of the Council was resumed at the 25th sitting, Comrade Pavlovich, continuing the old debate, pronounced in favour of the predominance of the Central Organ over the Central Committee "in view of the former's stability" (p 264) It was stability in matters of *principle* that he had in mind, and that was how he was understood by Comrade Martov who, speaking immediately after Comrade Pavlovich, considered it unnecessary "to fix the preponderance of one institution over the other" and pointed to the possibility of one of the members of the Central Committee residing abroad, "whereby the stability of the Central Committee in matters of principle would to some extent be preserved" (p 264) Here there is not as yet even a trace of the demagogic *confusion* of stability in matters of *principle*, and its preservation, with the preservation of the independence and initiative of the Central Committee *At the Congress*, this confusion, which *since the Congress* has almost become Comrade Martov's trump card, was furthered *only by Comrade Akimov*,

who *already* then spoke of the "Arakcheyev²² spirit of the Rules" (p. 268), and said that "*if there should happen to be three members from the Central Organ on the Party Council the Central Committee would be converted into a mere executor of the will of the editorial board.*" (My italics) "Three persons residing abroad would obtain the unrestricted (!) right to direct the work of the entire (!) Party. Their security would be guaranteed, and their power would therefore be lifelong" (p. 268). It was to this absolutely absurd and demagogic talk, in which *ideological leadership is called interference in the work of the entire Party* (and which after the Congress provided a cheap slogan for Comrade Axelrod with his talk about a "theocracy")—it was *to this* that Comrade Pavlovich again objected when he declared that he stood "for the stability and purity of the principles represented by the *Iskra*. By allowing the preponderance to the editorial board of the Central Organ I want to fortify these principles."

That is how the celebrated question of the predominance of the Central Organ over the Central Committee really stands. This famous "difference of principle" on the part of Comrades Axelrod and Martov is nothing but a *repetition of the opportunist and demagogic talk of Comrade Akimov*, the true character of which was clearly detected even by Comrade Popov, at a

time when he had not yet suffered defeat over the composition of the central bodies!

* * *

To sum up the question of the composition of the Council despite Comrade Martov's attempts in his *A State of Siege* to prove that my statement of the case in *A Letter to the Editorial Board* is contradictory and incorrect, the minutes of the Congress clearly show that, *in comparison* with §1, this question was indeed only a *detail*, and that the statement in the article "Our Congress" (*Iskra*, No 53) to the effect that we argued "almost exclusively" about the organization of the central institutions of the Party is a *complete distortion*. The distortion all the more outrageous since the author of the article *entirely ignored the dispute over §1*. Further, that there was no definite grouping of the *Iskra*-ists over the composition of the Council is also borne out by the minutes: there were no roll-call votes, Martov differed with Panin, I found common ground with Popov, Egorov and Gusev took up a separate stand, and so on. Finally, my last statement (at the congress of the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad), to the effect that the coalition of the Martovists and the anti-*Iskra*-ists grew stronger and stronger *is also borne out* by Comrade Martov's and Comrade Axelrod's swing towards Comrade Akimov on this question too, which is now apparent to everybody.

7 L CONCLUSION OF THE DEBATE
ON THE RULES CO-OPTION ON
THE CENTRAL BODIES WITHDRAWAL
OF THE *RABOCHEYE DYELO* DELEGATES

Of the subsequent debate on the Rules (26th sitting of the Congress), only the question of restricting the powers of the Central Committee is worth mentioning, for it throws light on the character of the *present* attacks of the Martovists on hypercentralism. Comrades Egorov and Popov strove for the restriction of centralism with a little more conviction, irrespective of their own candidature or of those they supported. Even when the question was still in the Rules Commission, they moved that the right of the Central Committee to dissolve local committees be restricted by making it contingent on the consent of the Council and, in addition, that it be limited to cases especially enumerated (p 272, note 1). This was opposed by three members of the Rules Commission (Glebov, Martov and myself), and at the Congress Comrade Martov supported our view

(p 273) and answered Egorov and Popov by saying that "the Central Committee would in any case deliberate before deciding on so serious a step as the dissolution of an organization" As you see, *at that time* Comrade Martov was still deaf to *every* anticentralist encroachment, and the Congress rejected the proposal of Egorov and Popov—only, unfortunately, the minutes do not tell us by how many votes

At the Party Congress, Comrade Martov was also "against the substitution of the word 'endorses' for the word 'organizes'" (the Central Committee organizes committees, etc —§6 of the Party Rules) "It must be given the right to *organize* as well" That is what Comrade Martov said *then*, not having yet hit on the wonderful idea that the concept "organize" does not include endorsement, which he discovered only at the Congress of the League.

Apart from these two points, the altogether minor disputes over particular points in §§5-11 of the Rules (*Minutes*, pp 273-76), are hardly of any interest Next came paragraph 12—the question of co-option to all Party bodies in general and to the central bodies in particular The Commission proposed to raise the majority required for co-option from two-thirds to four-fifths Glebov, who presented the report, moved that decisions to co-opt to the Central Committee must be *unanimous* Comrade Egorov, who con-

sidered *incongruities* undesirable, stood for a simple majority in the absence of a reasoned veto Comrade Popov agreed neither with the Commission nor with Comrade Egorov and demanded either a simple majority (without the right of veto) or unanimity Comrade Martov agreed neither with the Commission nor with Glebov, nor with Egorov, nor with Popov, declaring against unanimity, against four-fifths (in favour of two-thirds), and *against "mutual co-optation," that is, the right of the editorial board of the Central Organ to protest a co-optation to the Central Committee, and vice versa* ("the right of mutual control over co-optation")

As the reader sees, the groupings were highly variegated and the differences so fine as to lend "singularity" to the views of almost each delegate!

Comrade Martov said "I admit the psychological impossibility of working with unpleasant persons But it is also important for our organization to be virile and effectual The right of the Central Committee and the editorial board of the Central Organ to mutual control in cases of co-optation is unnecessary It is not because I think that one is not competent in the sphere of the other that I am against it No! The editorial board of the Central Organ, for instance, might give the Central Committee sound advice as to whether Mr. Nadezhdin, say, should be admitted

to the Central Committee I object because I do not want to create mutually exasperating red tape "

I objected "There are two questions at issue The first is the question of the required majority, and I am against lowering it from four-fifths to two-thirds The stipulation for a reasoned protest is not expedient, and I am against it Incomparably more important is the second question, the right of the Central Committee and the Central Organ to mutual control over co-option The mutual consent of the two central bodies is an essential condition for harmony What is involved here is a possible rupture between the two central bodies Whoever does not want a split should work for the achievement of harmony We know from the history of the Party that there have been people who caused splits It is a question of principle, a very important question, one on which the whole future of the Party may depend " (Pp. 276-77.) That is the full text of the summary of my speech as recorded at the Congress, a speech to which Comrade Martov attaches particularly serious importance Unfortunately, although attaching serious importance to it, he did not take the trouble to consider it in connection with the whole debate and the whole political situation at the Congress at the moment it was made

The first question that arises is why, in my

original draft (see p. 394, §11), did I confine myself to a two-thirds majority and did not demand mutual control over co-option to the central bodies? Comrade Trotsky, in fact, who spoke after me (p 277), at once raised this question

The answer to it is given in my speech at the League Congress and in Comrade Pavlovich's letter on the Second Congress. Paragraph 1 of the Rules "*broke the pot*," and it had to be bound tight with a "double knot"—I said at the League Congress That meant, firstly, that on a purely theoretical question, Martov had proved to be an opportunist, and his mistake had been *upheld* by Lieber and Akimov. It meant, secondly, that the coalition of the Martovists (that is, an insignificant minority of the *Iskra*-ists) and the anti-*Iskra*-ists had promised them a *majority at the Congress* in the voting on the personal composition of the central bodies And it was about the *personal composition* of the central bodies that I was speaking here, emphasizing the need for harmony and *warning against "people who cause splits"* This warning was indeed of important significance in principle, for the *Iskra* organization (which was undoubtedly more competent to decide the question of the personal composition of the central bodies, having as it did the closest practical acquaintance with all affairs and with all the candidates) had already made its recom-

mendations on this subject and had already adopted its well-known decision regarding the candidates who aroused its misgivings. Both morally and on its merits (that is, its competence to decide), the *Iskra* organization should have had the decisive say in this delicate matter. But *formally speaking*, of course, Comrade Marlov had every right to appeal to the Liebers and the Akimovs *against* the majority of the *Iskra* organization. And in his brilliant speech on §1, Comrade Akimov had said with remarkable explicitness and sagacity that whenever he perceived a difference among the *Iskra*-ists over the methods of achieving their common *Iskra* aim, he consciously and deliberately *voted for the worst method*, because his, Akimov's, aims were diametrically opposed to those of the *Iskra*-ists. There could not be the *slightest doubt* therefore that, quite irrespective of the wishes and intentions of Comrade Martov, *it was the worst composition of the central bodies* that would obtain the support of the Liebers and Akimovs. They *could vote*, they were bound to vote (judging by their *deeds*, by their vote on §1, and not by their words) precisely for that list which would promise the presence of "people who cause splits," and would do so precisely *in order to* "cause splits." Is it surprising, in view of this situation, that I said that it was an important question of principle (harmony between the two central bodies), one

on which the whole future of the Party might depend?

Not a single Social-Democrat at all acquainted with the *Iskra* ideas and plans and with the history of the movement, and at all earnest in sharing these views, could doubt for a moment that while it was right from the formal standpoint for the dispute within the *Iskra* organization over the composition of the central bodies to be decided by the Liebers and Akimovs, this decision would ensure the *worst* possible results. It was imperatively necessary to *fight* to avert these worst possible results.

The question is, how were we to fight? We fought, of course, not by hysterics and rows, but by methods which were *quite loyal and quite legitimate* perceiving that we were in the minority (as on the question of §1), *we appealed to the Congress to protect the rights of the minority*. Greater strictness regarding the required majority for adopting members (four-fifths instead of two-thirds), unanimity in cases of co-option, mutual control over co-option to the central bodies—all this we began to advocate *when we found ourselves in the minority over the question of the personal composition of the central bodies*. This fact is constantly ignored by the Ivans and the Peters who are not averse to pass judgment on the Congress on very slight grounds, after a couple of chats with friends, without ser-

studying *all* the minutes and all the "testimony" of the persons concerned. Yet anybody who desires to make a conscientious study of these minutes and this testimony will inevitably encounter the fact I have mentioned, namely, that the *root* of the dispute *at that moment of the Congress* was the *personal composition of the central bodies*, and that we strove for stricter conditions of control just because we were in the minority and wanted "a double knot to bind tight the pot" broken by Martov amid the jubilation and with the jubilant assistance of the Liebers and the Akimovs.

"If it were not so," Comrade Pavlovich said, speaking of this moment of the Congress, "it can only be assumed that in moving the point about unanimity in cases of co-option, we were concerned for the interests of our adversaries, for unanimity is unnecessary and even disadvantageous to the side which predominates in any institution" (*Letter on the Second Congress*, p. 14). But today the chronological order of events is far too often forgotten, it is forgotten that *for a long time at the Congress* the present minority was the majority (thanks to the participation of the Liebers and Akimovs), and that it was precisely at this time that the dispute over co-option to the central bodies took place, the underlying reason for which was the difference within the *Iskra* organization over the personal

composition of the central bodies. Whoever grasps this fact will understand the passion that marked our debates and will not be surprised by the *seeming* contradiction that certain petty differences over details gave rise to really important questions of principle

Comrade Deutsch, who spoke at this same sitting (p 277), was in many respects right when he said "This motion is undoubtedly designed for the given moment" Yes, indeed, it is only when we have understood the *given moment* in all its complexity, that we can understand the true meaning of the dispute And it is highly important to bear in mind that when *we* were in the minority, we defended the rights of the minority by *such methods* as are considered legitimate and permissible by any European Social-Democrat, namely, by appealing to the Congress for stricter control over the personal composition of the central bodies Similarly, Comrade Egorov was in many respects right when he said at the Congress, but at a different sitting "I am exceedingly surprised to hear reference to principles again being made in the debate " (This was said in reference to the elections to the Central Committee at the 31st sitting of the Congress, that is, if I am not mistaken, on Thursday morning, whereas the 26th sitting, of which we are now speaking, was held on Monday evening)
".. I think it is clear to everybody that during

the last few days the debate has not centred around any question of principle, but exclusively around the way to ensure or prevent the admission of one person or another to the central institutions. Let us acknowledge that principles have been lost at this Congress long ago, and call a spade a spade" (*General laughter. Muraviov: "I request to have it recorded in the minutes that Comrade Martov smiled"*—p. 337.) It is not surprising that Comrade Martov, like the rest of us, laughed at Comrade Egorov's complaints, which were indeed ridiculous. Yes, "*during the last few days*" a very great deal did revolve around the personal composition of the central bodies. That is true. That was indeed *clear to everybody* at the Congress (and it is only *now* that the minority is trying to *obscure* this clear fact). And it was true, lastly, that a spade should be called a spade. But, for God's sake, what has "loss of principles" to do with this? After all, we assembled at the Congress *in order, in the first days* (see p. 10, the Congress agenda), to discuss the program, tactics and rules and to decide the questions relating to them, and, *in the last days* (items 18 and 19 of the agenda), to discuss the personal composition of the central bodies and to decide *those* questions. When the *last days* of congresses are devoted to a struggle for the conductor's baton, that is natural and absolutely legitimate. (But when a fight for the

conductor's baton is waged *after congresses*, that is squabbling) If anybody suffers defeat *at a congress* over the personal composition of the central bodies (as Comrade Egorov did), it is *simply ridiculous* of him, *after that*, to speak of "loss of principles" It was therefore understandable why everybody laughed at Comrade Egorov And it was also understandable why Comrade Muravyov requested to have it recorded in the minutes that Comrade Martov shared in the laughter *in laughing at Comrade Egorov, Comrade Martov was laughing at himself..*

In supplement to Comrade Muravyov's irony, it would not be superfluous, perhaps, to mention the following fact As we know, *after the Congress* Comrade Martov asserted right and left that it was the question of co-option to the central bodies which played the cardinal role in our differences, and that the "majority of the old editorial board" was emphatically opposed to mutual control over co-option to the central bodies *Before the Congress*, when accepting my proposal to elect two trios, with mutual co-option by a two-thirds majority, Comrade Martov *wrote to me on the subject: "In accepting such a form of mutual co-option*, it should be stressed that after the Congress additions to each body will be effected on rather different lines (*I would advise the following* each body may co-opt new members, informing the other body of its inten-

tion; the latter may enter a protest, in which case the dispute shall be settled by the Council To avoid red tape, this procedure should be adopted in relation to candidates nominated beforehand, at least in the case of the Central Committee, from whose number the additions may then be made more expeditiously) In order to stress the point that subsequent co-option will be effected in the manner provided by the Party Rules, the following words should be added to §22- ' to which the decisions taken shall be submitted for endorsement'" (My italics)

Comment is superfluous

Having explained the significance of the moment at which the dispute over the subject of co-option to the central bodies took place, we must dwell somewhat on the *volings* on the subject—it is unnecessary to dwell on the *discussion*, as the speeches of Comrade Martov and myself already quoted were followed only by brief interchanges in which an insignificant

* The reference is to my original draft of the Tagesordnung (agenda—Tr) of the Congress and the comments to it, with which all the delegates were familiar. Paragraph 22 of this draft provided for the election of two trios—to the Central Organ and to the Central Committee—"mutual co-option" by these six with a two-thirds majority, the endorsement of the mutual co-options by the Congress, and subsequent co-option by the Central Organ and by the Central Committee separately

number of the delegates took part (see *Minutes*, pp 277-80) In relation to the voting, Comrade Martov asserted at the League Congress that I was guilty of an "utter distortion" (*League Minutes*, p. 60) in my statement of the case "in representing the struggle around the Rules" (Comrade Martov unwittingly uttered a profound truth after §1, the heated disputes were indeed *around* the Rules) "as a struggle of the *Iskra* against the Martovists who had entered into a coalition with the Bund."

Let us examine this interesting "utter distortion" Comrade Martov adds together the votings on the composition of the Council and the votings on co-option and gets *eight* in all: 1) Election to the Council of two members each from the Central Organ and the Central Committee—27 for (M), 16 against (L), 7 abstentions (It should be remarked in parentheses that the number of abstentions is shown in the *Minutes*—p 270—as 8, but that is a detail) 2) Election of the fifth member to the Council by the Congress—23 for (L), 18 against (M), 7 abstentions. 3) Replacement of lapsed members of the Council by the Council itself—23 against (M), 16 for (L), 12 abstentions 4) Unanimity on the Central Committee—25 for (L), 19 against (M), 7 abstentions 5) The demand for *one* reasoned

The letters M and L in parentheses indicate which side I (L) was on and which side Martov (M) was on

protest for the non-acceptance of a member—21 for (L), 19 against (M), 11 abstentions
 6) Unanimity for co-option to the Central Organ—23 for (L), 21 against (M), 7 abstentions
 7) Permissibility of a motion regarding the right of the Council to annul a decision of the Central Organ or the Central Committee not to accept a new member—25 for (M), 19 against (L), 7 abstentions
 8) The motion itself—24 for (M), 23 against (L), 4 abstentions "*Here, evidently*" Comrade Martov concludes (*League Minutes*, p 61), "*one Bund delegate voted for the motion while the rest abstained*" (My italics)

Why, may one ask, did Comrade Martov consider it *evident* that the Bundist voted for him, Martov, when there were no roll-call votes?

Because he counts the *number of voters*, and when it indicates that the Bund *took part* in the voting, he, Comrade Martov, does not doubt that it was in *his*, Martov's, favour.

Where, then, is the "utter distortion" on my part?

The total votes were 51, without the Bundists 46, without the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists 43 In seven of the eight votings mentioned by Comrade Martov, 43, 41, 39, 44, 40, 44 and 44 delegates took part; in *one*, 47 delegates (or, rather, votes), and here Comrade Martov himself admits that he was supported by a Bundist We thus find that the picture sketched by Martov (and sketched

incompletely, as we shall soon see) *only confirms and emphasizes my representation of the struggle!* It turns out that in a great many cases the number of abstentions was *very high* this points to the *relatively* slight interest shown by the Congress as a whole in certain *minor points*, and to the absence of a definite grouping of the *Iskra*-ists on these questions. Martov's statement that the Bundists "clearly assisted Lenin by abstaining from voting" (*League Minutes*, p 62), *in fact speaks against Martov* it means that it was *only* when the Bundists were absent, or abstained from voting, that I could sometimes count upon victory. But whenever the Bundists *thought it worth while* to intervene in the struggle, they supported Comrade Martov, and the above-mentioned case when 47 delegates voted was *not the only time* they intervened. Whoever cares to refer to the minutes of the Congress will notice *a very strange incompleteness* in Comrade Martov's picture Comrade Martov *simply omitted three cases* when the Bund *did take part* in the voting, and *it goes without saying that in all these cases* Comrade Martov was the victor Here are the three cases 1) Adoption of Comrade Fomin's amendment to lower the required majority from four-fifths to two-thirds—27 for, 21 against (p 278), that is, 48 votes, 2) Adoption of Comrade Martov's motion to delete mutual co-option—26 for, 24 against (p 279), that is,

50 votes. Lastly, 3) rejection of my motion to permit co-option to the Central Organ or the Central Committee only with the consent of all the members of the Council (p. 280)—27 against, 22 for (there was even a roll-call vote, of which, unfortunately, there is no record in the minutes), that is, 49 votes

To sum up on the question of co-option to the central bodies the Bundists took part *in only four votings* (the three I have just mentioned, with 48, 50 and 49 votes, and the *one* mentioned by Comrade Martov, with 47 votes). *In all these votings* Comrade Martov was the victor. *My statement of the case proves to be right in every particular* in declaring that there was a coalition with the Bund, in noting the relatively minor character of the questions (a large number of abstentions in very many cases), and in pointing to the absence of a definite grouping of the *Iskra*-ists (no roll-call votes; very few speakers in the debates).

Comrade Martov's attempt to detect a contradiction in my statement of the case, it turns out, was made with unworthy means, for he tore isolated words from their context and did not take the trouble to reconstruct the complete picture.

The last paragraph of the Rules, dealing with the foreign organization, again gave rise to

debates and votes which were highly significant from the point of view of the groupings at the Congress. The question at issue was whether the League should be recognized as the organization of the Party abroad. Comrade Akimov, of course, at once rose up in arms, reminding the Congress of the Union Abroad, which had been endorsed by the First Congress, and pointing out that the question was one of principle. "Let me first make the reservation," he said, "that I do not attribute any particular practical significance to whichever way the question is decided. The ideological struggle which has been waged within our Party is undoubtedly not over yet, but it will be continued on a different plane and with a different alignment of forces. Paragraph 13 of the Rules once more reflects, and in a very marked way, the tendency to convert our Congress from a Party congress into a factional congress. Instead of compelling all Social-Democrats in Russia to abide by the decisions of the Party Congress in the name of Party unity, and uniting all Party organizations, it is proposed that the Congress should destroy an organization of the minority and compel the minority to disappear from the scene" (P. 281). As the reader sees, the "continuity" which became so dear to Comrade Martov after his defeat over the composition of the central bodies was no less dear to Comrade Akimov. But, at the Congress, these people, who use different

criteria for themselves and for others, rose up in heated protest against Comrade Akimov. Although the program had been adopted, the *Iskra* recognized, and nearly the entire Rules passed, the very "principle" which distinguished the League from the Union "in principle" was brought to the fore. "If Comrade Akimov is anxious to make the issue one of principle," exclaimed Comrade Martov, "we have nothing against it, especially since Comrade Akimov has spoken of possible combinations in the struggle against the two trends. *The victory of one trend must be sanctioned*" (this, mark, was said at the 27th sitting of the Congress) "not in the sense that we make another bow to the *Iskra*, but in the sense that we *bow a last farewell to all the possible combinations of which Comrade Akimov spoke*" (P. 282; my italics).

What a picture! When all the disputes over the program at the Congress *were already over*, Comrade Martov continued to *bow a last farewell* to all possible combinations. . . until he suffered defeat over the composition of the central bodies! Comrade Martov "bowed a last farewell" at the Congress to that *possible* "combination" which he cheerfully brought to fruition *on the very morrow of the Congress*. But Comrade Akimov proved *already then* to be much more farsighted than Comrade Martov, Comrade Akimov referred to the five years' work of an "old Party organiza-

tion which, by the will of the First Congress, bears the name of a committee," and concluded with a most venomous and *prescient* stab "As to Comrade Martov's opinion that my hope of a new trend appearing in our Party is in vain, let me say that *even he himself inspires me with such hope*" (P. 283)

Yes, it must be confessed, Comrade Martov has fully justified Comrade Akimov's hope!

Comrade Martov joined Comrade Akimov and became convinced that he was right after the "continuity" of an old Party body which was deemed to have been working for three years had been broken. Comrade Akimov's victory did not cost him much effort.

But at the Congress, Comrade Akimov was backed—and backed consistently—only by Comrades Martynov and Brouckère and the Bundists (8 votes). Comrade Egorov, like the real leader of the "Centre" he is, adhered to the golden mean you see, he agreed with the *Iskra*-ists, "sympathized" with them (p. 282), and *proved* his sympathy by the *proposal* (p. 283) to avoid this question of principle altogether and *to say nothing* about either the League or the Union. The proposal was rejected by 27 votes to 15. Apparently, in addition to the anti-*Iskra*-ists (8), nearly the entire "Centre" (10) voted with Comrade Egorov (the total vote was 42, for a large number abstained or *were absent*, as often happened during

uninteresting votes or votes whose result was a *foregone conclusion*) As soon as it became a question of putting the *Iskra* principles into practice, it turned out that the "sympathy" of the "Centre" was purely *verbal*, and we secured only thirty votes or a little over This was borne out even more graphically by the debate and vote on Russov's motion (to recognize the League as the *sole* organization abroad) Here the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Marsh" took up an outright position of *principle*, which was defended by Comrades Lieber and Egorov, who declared Comrade Russov's motion unvotable and illegitimate. "It kills all the other organizations abroad" (Egorov) And, not desiring to have any part in "killing organizations," the speaker not only refused to vote, but even quit the hall. But the leader of the "Centre" must be given his due he displayed ten times more strength of conviction (in his mistaken principles) and political manhood than Comrade Martov and Co., for *it was not only when it concerned his own circle*, defeated in open combat, that he took up the cudgels for a "killed" organization.

Comrade Russov's motion was deemed votable by 27 votes to 15, and was then adopted by 25 votes to 17. If we add to these seventeen the absent Comrade Egorov, we get *the full complement (18) of the anti-"Iskra"-ists and the "Centre."*

Paragraph 13 of the Rules, dealing with the organization abroad, was adopted as a whole by only 31 votes to 12, with 6 abstentions. This figure, 31—showing the approximate number of the *Iskra*-ists at the Congress, that is, people who consistently advocated and *actually* carried out the views of the *Iskra*—we are now encountering for the *sixth time* in our analysis of the votes at the Congress (place of the Bund question on the agenda, the Organization Committee episode, the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, and the two votes on the agrarian program). Yet Comrade Martov seriously wants to assure us that there are no grounds for picking out such a “narrow” group of *Iskra*-ists!

Nor can we help mentioning that the adoption of §13 of the Rules evoked an extremely characteristic discussion in connection with a statement by Comrades Akimov and Martynov that they “refuse to take part in the voting” (p 288). The Bureau of the Congress discussed this statement and found—quite reasonably—that not even the direct closing down of the Union would entitle its delegates to refuse to take part in the work of the Congress. Refusal to vote is absolutely abnormal and impermissible—such was the view of the Bureau shared by the whole Congress, including those *Iskra*-ists of the minority who at the 28th sitting *hotly condemned what they themselves were guilty of at the 31st sitting!* When

Comrade Martynov began to defend his statement (p 291), he was opposed by Pavlovich, by Trotsky, by Karsky and by Martov. Comrade Martov was particularly clear on the duties of a dissatisfied minority (until he found himself in the minority!) and held forth on the subject in a very monitorial way. "Either you are delegates to the Congress," he exclaimed, addressing himself to Comrades Akimov and Martynov, "in which case you *must* take part in *all* its work" (my italics, Comrade Martov did not yet perceive any formalism and bureaucracy in subordinating the minority to the majority!), "or you are not delegates, in which case you cannot remain at the sittings ... The statement of the Union delegates compels me to ask two questions: are they members of the Party and are they delegates to the Congress?" (P. 292.)

Comrade Martov instructing Comrade Akimov in the duties of a Party member! But it was not without reason that Comrade Akimov had said that he had some hopes in Comrade Martov.... These hopes were fated to be realized, but only *after* Martov had been defeated in the elections. When the matter did not concern himself, but others, Comrade Martov was deaf even to the terrible catchword "emergency law," *first launched* (if I am not mistaken) *by Comrade Martynov*. "The explanation given us," Comrade Martynov replied to those who had tried to per-

suade him to withdraw his statement, "did not make it clear whether the decision was one of principle, or an *emergency measure* against the Union. If it is, we consider that the Union has been insulted. Comrade Egorov got the same impression as we did, namely, that it was an *emergency law*" (my italics) "against the Union, and therefore even quit the hall." (P 295) Both Comrade Martov and Comrade Trotsky, together with Plekhanov, vigorously protested against the absurd, *truly absurd*, idea of regarding a vote of the Congress as an *insult*, and Comrade Trotsky, defending a resolution adopted by the Congress on his motion (that Comrades Akimov and Martynov might deem that full satisfaction had been given them), assured them that "the resolution is one of principle, and not a philistine one, *and it is no business of ours if anybody is offended by it*" (p 296) But it very soon became apparent that the circle spirit and the mentality of the philistine are still all too strong in our Party, and the proud words I have italicized proved to be merely a high-sounding phrase

Comrades Akimov and Martynov refused to withdraw their statement and quit the Congress, amidst the general cry of the delegates: "Absolutely unwarranted!"

M THE ELECTIONS END OF THE CONGRESS

After adopting the Rules, the Congress passed a resolution on district organizations and a number of resolutions on various Party organizations, and, following the extremely instructive debate on the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group which I have analyzed above, proceeded to discuss the election of the Party's central institutions.

We already know that the *Iskra* organization, from which the entire Congress had expected an authoritative recommendation, had split over this question, for the *minority* of the organization wanted to test in free and open combat whether it could not succeed in winning a *majority* at the Congress. We also know that long before the Congress, and at the Congress itself, all the delegates were aware of the plan to *renovate* the editorial board by the election of two trios, one to the Central Organ and one to the Central Committee. Let us dwell on this plan in greater

detail in order to elucidate the debate at the Congress.

Here is the exact text of my comment to the draft Tagesordnung of the Congress where this plan was set forth: "The Congress shall elect three persons to the editorial board of the Central Organ and three to the Central Committee. These six persons, *in conjunction*, shall, if necessary, by a two-thirds majority vote, co-opt new members to the editorial board of the Central Organ and to the Central Committee and report to this effect to the Congress. After the report has been endorsed by the Congress, subsequent co-option shall be effected by the editorial board of the Central Organ and by the Central Committee separately."

The plan stands out quite definitely and unambiguously in this text: it implies a *renovation* of the editorial board, effected *with the participation* of the most influential leaders of the practical work. Both features of this plan that I have stressed become clear at once to anybody who takes the trouble to read the text quoted at all attentively. But nowadays one has to stop and explain the most rudimentary things. It is precisely a *renovation* of the editorial board that the plan implies—not necessarily the enlargement, and not necessarily the reduction of its

* See my *Letter to the "Iskra" Editorial Board*, p. 5, and the *League Minutes*, p. 53.

membership, but its renovation; for the question of its possible enlargement or reduction is left *open*: co-option is provided for only *if necessary*. Among the suggestions regarding such a renovation made by various people, some contained plans for a possible reduction of the number of members of the editorial board, and some for an increase of their number to seven (I personally have always regarded seven as far more desirable than six), and even to eleven (I considered this possible in the event of a peaceful union being reached with all Social-Democratic organizations in general, and with the Bund and the Polish Social-Democrats in particular). But what is most important, and this is usually overlooked by people who talk about a "trio," is the demand that the members of the Central Committee shall have a share in deciding on the further co-option to the Central Organ. Not one comrade of all the "minority" members of the organization or Congress delegates who knew of this plan and approved of it (either explicitly or tacitly) took the trouble to explain the meaning of this demand. Firstly, why was a trio, and only a trio, taken as the starting point for the renovation of the editorial board? Obviously, this would be *absolutely senseless* if the *sole*, or, at least, the main, purpose was to *enlarge* the body, and if that body was really considered a "harmonious" one. If the purpose was to enlarge a "har-

monious" body, it would be strange to *start* not with the whole body, but with only *a part*. Obviously, *not all* the members of the body were considered quite fit to discuss and *decide* the matter of renovating its composition, of converting the old editorial circle into a *Party institution*. Obviously, even those who personally desired to renovate it by enlarging it considered that its old composition was not harmonious and did not answer to the ideal of a Party institution, for otherwise there would be no reason *first* to reduce the six to *three* in order to enlarge it I repeat, this is self-evident, and only the temporary confusion of the issue by "personalities" could have caused it to be forgotten.

Secondly, it will be seen from the above-quoted text that even *the agreement of all three members of the Central Organ* would not by itself be enough for the enlargement of the trio. This, too, is always lost sight of. Two-thirds of the *six*, that is, *four* votes, were to be required for co-option, hence it would only be necessary for the three members elected to the Central Committee to exercise their veto, and *no enlargement of the trio would be possible*. Conversely, even if two of the three members of the editorial board of the Central Organ were opposed to further co-option, it would nevertheless be possible if all three members of the Central Committee were in favour of it. It is thus obvious that

the intention was, in converting the old circle into a Party institution, to grant the *deciding* voice to the leaders of the practical work elected at the Congress. Which comrades we roughly had in mind may be seen from the fact that prior to the Congress the editorial board unanimously elected Comrade Pavlovich a seventh member to their body, in case it should be necessary to speak at the Congress on behalf of the board, in addition to Comrade Pavlovich, a certain old member of the *Iskra* organization and a member of the Organization Committee, *who was subsequently elected to the Central Committee*, was proposed for the seventh place.

Thus the plan for the election of two trios was obviously designed 1) to renovate the editorial board, 2) to rid it of certain features of the old circle spirit, which is out of place in a Party institution (if there had been nothing to get rid of there would have been no point in the idea of an initial trio!) and, lastly, 3) to get rid of the "theocratic" features of a literary body (to get rid of them by enlisting the services of prominent practical workers *in deciding* how the trio was to be enlarged). This plan, with which all the editors were acquainted, was obviously based on *three years' experience* of work and *fully* accorded with the principles of revolutionary organization we were consistently carrying out. In the period of *disunity*, the period in which

Iskra entered the arena, groups were often formed haphazardly and spontaneously, and inevitably suffered from certain obnoxious manifestations of the circle spirit. The creation of a Party presupposed and demanded the elimination of these features, the participation of prominent practical workers in this elimination was *essential*, for certain members of the editorial board had *always* been in charge of organizational affairs, and the body that was to enter the system of Party institutions was a body of political leaders, and not merely a literary body. It was likewise natural from the standpoint of the policy the *Iskra* had always pursued to leave the selection of the initial trio to the Congress: we had observed the greatest *caution* in preparing for the Congress, waiting until all disputable questions of principle relating to program, tactics and organization had been *fully* elucidated, we had *no doubt* that the Congress would be an "*Iskra*" one in the sense that its overwhelming majority would be solid on these fundamental questions (this is partly borne out also by the resolutions on the adoption of the *Iskra* as the leading organ); we *had* therefore to leave it to the comrades who had borne the whole brunt of the work of disseminating the ideas of the *Iskra* and of preparing for its conversion into a Party to decide *for themselves* who were the most suitable candidates for the new Party institution.

It is *only* by the fact that this plan of "two trios" was a natural one, *only* by the fact that it *fully accorded* with the *Iskra's* whole policy and with all that was known about the *Iskra* to everybody at all acquainted with the work, that the general approval of this plan and the absence of any rival plan *can be explained*

And so, at the Congress, Comrade Russov first of all moved the election of *two trios*. It *never even occurred* to the followers of Martov, who *had informed us in writing of the connection of this plan with the false accusation of opportunism*, to reduce the dispute about whether there should be six or three to whether this accusation was right or wrong. *Not one of them even hinted at it! None of them ventured to say a single word* about the different shades of principle involved in the dispute over six or three. They preferred a commoner and cheaper method, namely, to evoke *pity*, to speak of *possible injured feelings*, to pretend that *the question of the editorial board had already been settled* by making the *Iskra* the central organ. This last argument, adduced by Comrade Koltsov against Comrade Russov, was a piece of *downright falsity*. Two separate points were included—not fortuitously, of course—in the Congress agenda (see *Minutes*, p. 10) point 4—"Central Organ of the Party"; and point 18—"Election of the Central Committee and the editorial board of the Central Organ." That in

the first place In the second place, when the Central Organ was being appointed, *all* the delegates categorically declared that this did *not* mean the endorsement of the editorial board, but only of the trend,* and *not a single protest* was raised against these declarations.

Thus the statement that by endorsing a definite organ the Congress had in effect endorsed the editorial board—a statement many times reiterated by the followers of the minority—(by Koltsov, p 321, by Posadovsky, p. 321, by Popov, p 322, and by many others)—*was simply untrue in fact* It was a perfectly obvious *manœuvre* to cover the *retreat* from the position held at the time when the question of the composition of the

* See *Minutes*, p 140, Akimov's speech ". . I am told that we shall discuss the election of the Central Organ at the end", Muravov's speech against Akimov, "who takes the question of the future editorial board of the Central Organ very much to heart" (p 141); Pavlovich's speech to the effect that, having appointed the organ, we had obtained "the concrete material on which to perform the operations Comrade Akimov is so much concerned about," and that there cannot be a shadow of doubt about the "subordination" of the *Iskra* to the "decisions of the Party" (p 142), Troisky's speech "Since we are not endorsing the editorial board, what is it that we are endorsing in the *Iskra*? . Not the name, but the trend . not the name, but the banner" (p. 142), Martynov's speech "Like many other comrades, I consider that while discussing the adoption of the *Iskra*, as a newspaper of a definite trend, as our Central Organ, we should not at this juncture discuss the method of electing or endorsing its editorial board, we shall discuss that later in its proper order on the agenda. . ." (P 143)

central bodies could still be regarded *in a really dispassionate light by all*. The retreat could not be justified either on motives of principle (for to raise the question of a "false accusation of opportunism" *at the Congress* was too much to the *disadvantage* of the minority, and they *did not even hint* at it), or by a reference to the *factual* data showing which was actually more workable—six or three (for the mere mention of these facts would have produced a heap of arguments against the minority). They had to try to burke the issue by *talk* about a "symmetrical whole," about a "harmonious body," about a "symmetrical and crystal-integral entity," and so on. It is not surprising that these arguments were immediately called by their true name "*wretched words*" (p. 328). The very plan for a trio clearly testified to a lack of "harmony," and the impressions obtained by the delegates from working together for over a month obviously afforded a mass of material to enable them to judge *for themselves*. When Comrade Posadovsky hinted at this material (incautiously and injudiciously from his own standpoint: see pp. 321 and 325 regarding his "provisional" use of the word "incongruities") Comrade Muravyov bluntly declared: "In my opinion it is now quite clear to the majority of the Congress that such * incon-

* What "incongruities" exactly Comrade Posadovsky had in mind we never learned at the Congress. Comrade

gruities undoubtedly do exist" (p 321). The minority chose to construe the word "incongruities" (which was given currency by Posadovsky, and not by Muravyov) in a purely personal sense, not daring to take up the gauntlet flung down by Comrade Muravyov, and not daring to bring forward *a single argument to the point* in defence of a board of six. The result was a dispute which for its sterility was more than comic; the majority (through the mouth of Comrade Muravyov) declared that they *quite clearly perceived* the true significance of the six and the three, whereas the minority persistently refused to listen and affirmed that "we are *not in a position* to examine it." The majority not only considered themselves in a position to examine it, but had "examined it" already and announced that the results of the examination were *quite clear* to them, whereas the minority apparently *feared an examination* and resorted to nothing but "wretched words" as a screen. The majority advised that it "be borne in mind that our Central Organ is something more than

Muravyov, for his part, claimed at this same sitting (p 322) that his ideas had not been correctly interpreted and when the minutes were being endorsed he plainly declared that he "was referring to the incongruities which have been revealed in the Congress debates on various points, incongruities as to principle, whose existence is now unfortunately a fact which nobody will deny" (p 353).

a literary group"; the majority "wanted the Central Organ to be headed by *quite definite persons, persons known to the Congress, persons satisfying the demands I have mentioned*" (that is, not only demands of a literary character, Comrade Lange's speech, p. 327). Again the minority did not dare to take up the gauntlet and did not say a word as to who, in their opinion, was suitable for a body which was something more than a literary body, as to who was a "quite definite" magnitude "known to the Congress" The minority continued to take shelter behind their celebrated "harmony" Nor was this all The minority even introduced into the debate arguments which were absolutely false from the standpoint of principle and which therefore quite rightly evoked a sharp rebuff. "The Congress," don't you see, "has neither the moral nor the political right to refashion the editorial board" (Trotsky, p. 326); "it is too delicate (*sic!*) a question" (Trotsky again); "*how will the members of the editorial board who are not re-elected feel about the fact that the Congress does not want to see them on the board any more?*" (Tsaryov, p 324) *

* Cf Comrade Posadovsky's speech "... By electing three of the six members of the old editorial board, you admit the other three to be unnecessary and superfluous. And for this you have neither the right nor the justification "

Such arguments simply put the whole question on the plane of *pity and injured feelings*, and were a direct admission of bankruptcy as regards real arguments of principle, real political arguments. And the majority immediately gave this presentation of the question its *true name philistinism* (Comrade Russov). "We are hearing strange speeches from the lips of revolutionaries," Comrade Russov justly remarked, "speeches that are in marked disharmony with the concept Party work, Party ethics. The principal argument adduced by the opponents of electing trios amounts to a *purely philistine view of Party affairs* . ." (my italics throughout) "If we adopt this standpoint, which is a *philistine* and not a Party standpoint, we shall at every election have to consider the question: will not Petrov be offended if Ivanov is elected and not he, will not some member of the Organization Committee be offended if another member is elected to the Central Committee and not he? Where will this lead us, comrades? If we have gathered here for the purpose of creating a Party, and *not for the exchange of mutual compliments, not for the display of philistine compassion*, then we can never agree to such a view. We are about to *elect officials*, and there can be no talk of lack of confidence in one or another person not elected, *our only consideration should be to promote the cause and that a person elected to a post is suited for it*" (P. 325).

We would advise all who desire to make an independent examination of the reasons for the Party split and to dig down to the *roots* of it at the Congress to read this speech of Comrade Russov's *over and over again*, his arguments were not even contested by the minority, let alone refuted. In fact, it was impossible to contest such elementary, rudimentary truths, which were forgotten only because of "*nervous excitement*," as Comrade Russov himself rightly explained. And as far as the minority is concerned, this is really the least unpleasant explanation of how they could desert the Party standpoint for a philistine and circle standpoint.

* In his *A State of Siege*, Comrade Martov treated this question just as he treated all the other questions he touched upon. He did not take the trouble to give a complete picture of the controversy. He very modestly evaded the only real question of *principle* which arose in this controversy: Philistine compassion, or the election of officials, the Party standpoint, or the injured feelings of the Ivan Ivanoviches? Here, too, Comrade Martov confined himself to picking out individual unconnected events, separating them from their context and adding all sorts of abusive remarks at my expense. That's not enough, Comrade Martov!

Comrade Martov particularly pesters *me* with the question *why* Comrades Axelrod, Zasulich and Starover were not put up for election at the Congress. The philistine attitude he has adopted prevents him from seeing how *indecent* these questions are (why doesn't he ask his colleague on the editorial board, Comrade Plekhanov?) He detects a contradiction in the fact that I consider the behaviour of the minority at the Congress on the question of the six "tactless," and yet at the same time demand

But the minority was so incapable of finding sensible and businesslike arguments against the elections that, in addition to introducing philistinism into Party affairs, they resorted to *practices*

Party publicity There is no contradiction here, as Martov himself could easily have seen if he had taken the trouble to give a connected account of *all* the vicissitudes of the matter, and not fragments of it It was tactless to treat the question from a philistine standpoint, and to appeal for pity and consideration for injured feelings, the interests of Party publicity demanded that an estimation be given of the *essence* of the advantages of six as compared with three, an estimation of the candidates to the posts, an estimation of the different shades *The minority did not even give a hint of this at the Congress*

By carefully studying the minutes, Comrade Martov would have found in the speeches of the delegates a *whole number* of arguments against a board of six Here is a selection from these speeches firstly, that incongruities, in the sense of different shades of principle, were clearly apparent in the old six, secondly, that a technical simplification of the editorial work was desirable, thirdly, that the cause was higher than considerations of philistine compassion, and only elections could ensure that the persons selected were suited for their posts, fourthly, that the right of the Congress to select must not be restricted, fifthly, that the Party now needed something more than a literary group on the Central Organ, that the Central Organ needed not only writers, but administrators as well, sixthly, that the Central Organ must consist of quite definite persons, persons known to the *Congress*, seventhly, that the body of six was often unworkable, and that its work had been accomplished *not thanks to* abnormal rules, *but in spite of* them, eighthly, that the conduct of a newspaper is a Party (not a circle) affair, etc Let Comrade Martov, if he is so interested in the reasons for the non-election of these persons, *penetrate* into the meaning of each of these considerations and refute *even a single one* of them

that were outright *scandalous*. Indeed, what other name can we give to the practices of Comrade Popov when he advised Comrade Muravyov "not to undertake delicate *commissions*" (p 322)? What is this but "probing into a man's soul," as Comrade Sorokin rightly put it (p 328)? What is it but speculating on "*personalities*," in the absence of *political* arguments? Was Comrade Sorokin right or wrong when he said that "we have always protested against such practices"? "*Was it permissible of Comrade Deutsch* demonstratively to try to pillory comrades who did not agree with him?" (P 328)

Let us sum up the debate on the editorial board. The minority did not refute (nor did they

* That is the way Comrade Sorokin, *at this same sitting*, understood Comrade Deutsch's words (cf p 324—"sharp dialogue with Orlov"). Comrade Deutsch explains (p 351) that he "said nothing like it," but *there and then* admits that he said something *very, very much* "like it," "I did not say 'who dares,'" Comrade Deutsch explains, "what I said was 'I would be interested to see the people who would dare'" (*sic!*—Comrade Deutsch falls out of the frying pan into the fire!) "'to support such a criminal'" (*sic!*) "'motion as the election of a board of three'" (P 351.) Comrade Deutsch did not refute, *but confirmed* Comrade Sorokin's words. Comrade Deutsch confirmed Comrade Sorokin's reproach that "all concepts are here muddled" (in the arguments of the minority in favour of six). Comrade Deutsch confirmed the pertinence of Comrade Sorokin's reminder of the *elementary* truth that "we are Party members and should be exclusively guided by political considerations." To howl that the elections were *criminal* is to sink not only to philistinism, but to practices that are outright *scandalous*!

try to refute) the numerous statements of the majority that the plan for a trio was known to the *delegates* at the very beginning of the Congress and prior to the Congress, and that, consequently, this plan was based on *considerations and facts which had no relation to the events and disputes at the Congress*. In defending a board of six, the minority took up a position which was *wrong in principle and impermissible*, one based on *philistine* considerations. The minority displayed an utter forgetfulness of the *Party* attitude towards the election of *officials*, not even attempting to give an *estimation* of each candidate for a post and of his suitability or unsuitability for the functions it involved. The minority *evaded* a discussion of the question on its merits, and talked instead of their celebrated harmony, "shedding tears" and "giving way to pathos" (Lange's speech, p 327), as though "somebody was being murdered." In a state of "*nervous excitement*," the minority even went to the length of "*probing into people's souls*," howling that the elections were "criminal," and resorted to similar *impermissible* practices. (P 325)

The battle over the six or the three at the 30th sitting of our Congress was a battle between *philistinism* and the *Party spirit*, between the worst kind of "*personalities*" and *political considerations*, between *wretched words* and the elementary conception of *revolutionary duty*.

And at the 31st sitting, when the Congress, by a majority of 19 to 17, with 3 abstentions, had *rejected* the motion to endorse the old editorial board as a whole (see p 330 and the *errata*) and when the *former editors* had returned to the hall, Comrade Martov, in his "statement on behalf of the majority of the former editorial board" (pp 330-31), displayed this same shakiness and instability of political position and *political concepts* to an even greater degree. Let us examine in detail each point of the collective *statement* and my reply (pp 332-33)

"From now on," Comrade Martov said when the old editorial board was not endorsed, "the old *Iskra* does not exist, and it would be more consistent to change its name. At any rate, we see in the new resolution of the Congress a substantial limitation of the vote of confidence in the *Iskra* which was passed at one of the first Congress sittings"

Comrade Martov and his colleagues raise a truly interesting and in many respects instructive question of *political consistency* I have already replied to this by referring to what was said by *everybody* when the *Iskra* was confirmed (*Minutes*, p 349, cf above, p 82).^{*} What we have here is unquestionably a crying instance of political inconsistency, but whether on the part of

^{*} See pp 188-89 of this pamphlet.—Ed

kind of 'friction,' of the unworkableness of the old editorial board, moreover, the Congress decided the question along definite lines without questioning the editorial board about this friction or even appointing a commission to report on the question of its unworkableness " (Strange that it never occurred to any member of the minority to propose to the Congress to "question the editorial board" or appoint a commission! Was it not because it would have been useless after the split in the *Iskra* organization and the failure of the negotiations Comrade Martov and Starover wrote about?) "Under the circumstances, I must regard the assumption of certain comrades that I would agree to sit on an editorial board re-

* Comrade Martov is probably referring to Comrade Posadovsky's expression "incongruities" I repeat that Comrade Posadovsky never did explain to the Congress what *he* meant, while Comrade Muravyov, who had used the same expression, explained that he meant the incongruities of *principle revealed in the discussions at the Congress* The reader will recall that the *sole* occasion when there was a real discussion of *principles* in which four of the editors (Plekhanov, Martov, Axelrod and I) took part was in connection with §1 of the Rules, and that Comrades Martov and Starover complained *in writing* of a "false accusation of opportunism" as being one of the arguments in favour of "changing" the editorial board *In this letter*, Comrade Martov had detected a *clear* connection between "opportunism" and the plan to change the editorial board, but *at the Congress* he confined himself to hinting hazily at "*some kind of friction*" The "false accusation of opportunism" had already been forgotten!

formed in this manner as a slur on my political reputation. . . .”*

I have purposely quoted this argument in full to acquaint the reader with a specimen and with the beginning of what has blossomed out so profusely *since the Congress* and which cannot be called by any other name than *squabbling*. I have already employed this expression in my *Letter to the Editorial Board of "Iskra,"* and in spite of the annoyance of the editorial board, I am obliged to repeat it, for its correctness is beyond dispute. It is a mistake to think that squabbling presupposes “sordid motives” (as the

* Comrade Martov further added “Ryazanov might agree to such a role, but not the Martov whom, I think, you know by his work.” Inasmuch as this was a *personal* attack on Ryazanov, Comrade Martov withdrew the remark. But it was not because of Ryazanov’s personal qualities (to refer to them would have been out of place) that his name figured at the Congress as an appellative; it was rather because of the *political complexion* of the *Borba* group—its *political mistakes* Comrade Martov does well to withdraw real or assumed personal insults, but this should not lead us to forget the *political mistakes* which should serve as a *lesson to the Party*. The *Borba* group was accused at our Congress of causing “organizational chaos” and “disunity not necessitated by any consideration of principle” (Comrade Martov’s speech, p 38). Such political conduct does indeed deserve censure, and not only when indulged in by a small group prior to the Party Congress, during the period of *general* chaos, but also when indulged in *after* the Party Congress, in the period when the chaos has been removed, even if it be by the “majority of the *Iskra* editorial board and the majority of the Emancipation of Labour group.”

editors of the new *ISRA* conclude): any revolutionary who is at all acquainted with our colonies of exiles and political émigrés has no doubt witnessed dozens of cases of squabbling in which the most absurd accusations, suspicions, self-accusations, "personalities," etc., were levelled and harped upon owing to "nervous excitement" and the abnormal, stagnant conditions of life. No sensible person will necessarily seek for sordid *motives* in these squabbles, *however sordid their manifestation may be*. And it is only to "nervous excitement" that we can attribute that tangled skein of absurdities, personalities, fantastic horrors, probing into souls, imaginary insults and slurs contained in the passage from Comrade Martov's speech which I have quoted. Stagnant conditions of life breed such squabbles by the hundred, and a political party would be unworthy of respect if it did not have the courage to designate its malady by its true name, to make a ruthless diagnosis and to search for a means of cure.

To the extent that any principles can be distinguished at all in this tangled skein, we are *inevitably* led to the conclusion that "there is no relation between elections and slurs on political reputations," that "to deny that the Congress is entitled to hold new elections, to make any changes in official appointments and to alter the bodies which it has set up," is *to confuse* the issue; and that "Comrade Martov's views as to

the permissibility of electing only part of the old board display an *extreme confusion of political ideas*" (as I expressed it at the Congress, p 332)

I shall omit Comrade Martov's "personal" remark as to who initiated the plan for the trio, and shall pass to his "political" definition of the significance that attaches to the non-endorsement of the old editorial board " ..what has now taken place is the last act of the struggle which has raged during the second half of the Congress .." (Quite right! And this second half of the Congress began when Martov fell into the tight clutches of Comrade Akimov over §1 of the Rules) "It is an open secret that it is not the question of 'workableness' that is at issue in this reform, but a struggle for influence over the Central Committee " (Firstly, it is an open secret that *both* workableness *and* a difference over the *composition* of the Central Committee were at issue here, for the plan of the "reform" was proposed at a time when a second divergence of opinion *was not even expected*, and when Comrade Martov joined us in electing Comrade Pavlovich as a seventh member of the editorial board! Secondly, we have already shown by *documentary* proofs that it was the *personal composition* of the Central Committee that was at issue, that à la fin des fins the matter amounted to a difference of lists. Glebov-Travinsky-Popov or Glebov-Trotsky-Popov). "The majority of the

editorial board showed that they had no desire to have the Central Committee converted into a tool of the editorial board . " (That is Akimov's refrain the question of the influence for which every majority fights at every party congress without exception so as then to *cement* it with the help of a *majority* on the central institutions is here transferred to the plane of *opportunist slanders* about a "tool" of the *editorial board*, about a "mere *appendage*" to the editorial board, as Comrade Martov himself put it somewhat later, p 334) ". That is why it was found necessary to reduce the number of members of the editorial board (11) And that is why I cannot join such an editorial board ." (Just examine this "that is why" a little more carefully How *might* the editorial board have converted the Central Committee into an appendage or a tool? *Only* if it had three votes on the Council and *abused* its superiority Is that not clear? And is it not likewise clear that, having been elected the third member, Comrade Martov could always prevent such an abuse and *by his vote alone* destroy all superiority of the editorial board on the Council? Consequently, the whole matter boils down to the personal composition of the Central Committee, and it is at once clear that the talk about a tool and an appendage is *slander*) . "Together with the majority of the old editorial board, I thought that the Congress would put an

end to the 'state of siege' in the Party and would establish a normal state of affairs. But as a matter of fact, the state of siege, with its emergency laws against certain groups, still continues, and has become even more acute. Only if the old editorial board remains in its entirety can we guarantee that the rights conferred on the editorial board by the Rules will not be used to the detriment of the Party. "

There you have the whole passage from Comrade Martov's speech in which *he first advanced the notorious slogan of a "state of siege"*. And now look at my reply

3 "In correcting Martov's statement regarding the private character of the plan for two trios, I have no intention of touching upon another statement made by Martov—the one regarding the 'political significance' of the step we took in not endorsing the old editorial board. On the contrary, I fully and unreservedly agree with Comrade Martov that this step is of great political significance—only not the significance which Martov attributes to it. He said that it was an act in the struggle for influence on the Central Committee in Russia. I go farther than Martov. The entire activity of the *Iskra* as a separate group has hitherto been a struggle for influence, but now it is a matter of something more, namely, the organizational consolidation of this influence, and not only a struggle for it. How profoundly we differ with Comrade Martov politically on this point is demonstrated by the fact that he blames me for this wish to influence the Central Committee, whereas I count it to my credit that I strove and continue to strive to consolidate this influence by organizational means. It appears that we are even

talking in different languages What would be the point of all our work, of all our efforts, if they ended in the same old struggle for influence, and not in its complete acquisition and consolidation? Yes, Comrade Martov is absolutely right the step we have taken is undoubtedly a big political step and shows that one of the trends now to be observed has been chosen for the future work of our Party *And I am not at all frightened by the dreadful words 'state of siege in the Party,' 'emergency laws against individuals and groups,' etc* We not only may, but must, create a 'state of siege' in relation to unstable and shaky elements, and our entire Party Rules and the entire system of centralism now endorsed by the Congress are nothing but a 'state of siege' in respect to the numerous sources of political vagueness Precisely special laws, even if they are emergency laws, are needed as measures against vagueness, and the step taken by the Congress correctly mapped out the political trend by creating a firm basis for such laws and measures "

I have underscored in this summary of my speech at the Congress the *phrase which Comrade Martov preferred to omit in his "A State of Siege"* (p 16) It is not surprising that this phrase was not to his liking and he did not want to understand its obvious meaning

What does the expression "dreadful words" imply, Comrade Martov?

It implies a *jibe*, a jibe at those who give big names to little things, who confuse a simple question by pretentious phrasemongering

The little and simple fact, which *alone* could have given, and actually did give, Comrade

Martov cause for "nervous excitement," was *solely* his *defeat at the Congress over the personal composition of the central bodies*. The political significance of this simple fact was that, having scored victory, the majority of the Party Congress consolidated its influence by securing its majority in the Party administration as well, by creating an organizational basis for a struggle, with the help of the Rules, against what this majority considered to be shakiness, instability and vagueness. To talk with horror in one's eyes of a "struggle for influence" in this connection and to complain of a "state of siege" was nothing but *pretentious phrasemongering*, dreadful words.

Comrade Martov does not agree with this? Well, then perhaps he will point to a party congress where the majority did not try to consolidate the influence they have gained 1) by securing a majority on the central bodies, and 2) by endowing it with powers to counteract shakiness,

* How was the instability, shakiness and vagueness of the *Iskra* minority manifested at the Congress? Firstly, by the opportunist phrasemongering over §1 of the Rules, secondly, by the coalition with Comrades Akimov and Lieber, which during the second half of the Congress rapidly grew more pronounced, thirdly, by its readiness to degrade the question of electing officials to the Central Organ to philistinism, to wretched words, and even to probing into the souls of others. After the Congress all these lovely attributes developed from mere buds into blossoms and fruit.

instability and vagueness? Or perhaps he will show us that a party congress is in general conceivable without this?

Before the elections, our Congress had to decide whether to give *one-third* of the votes on the Central Organ and on the Central Committee to the Party majority or to the Party minority. A board of six and Comrade Martov's list meant giving one-third to us and two-thirds to his followers. A trio on the Central Organ and our list meant two-thirds for us and one-third for Comrade Martov's followers. Comrade Martov refused to arrive at an arrangement with us or to yield, and he challenged us *in writing* to a battle at the Congress. Having suffered defeat at the Congress, he fell a-weeping and complaining of a "state of siege"! Well, isn't that squabbling? Isn't it a new manifestation of the wishy-washiness of the intellectual?

One cannot help recalling in this connection the brilliant social and psychological characterization of this latter quality recently given by Karl Kautsky. The Social-Democratic parties of different countries suffer not infrequently nowadays from similar maladies, and it would be extremely useful for us to learn from more experienced comrades the correct diagnosis and the correct cure. Karl Kautsky's characterization of certain intellectuals will therefore be only a seeming digression from our theme.

"The problem that again interests us so keenly today is the *antagonism between the intelligentsia* * and the *proletariat* My colleagues" (Kautsky is himself an intellectual, a writer and editor) "will mostly be indignant that I admit this antagonism But it actually exists, and, as in other cases, it would be the most inexpedient tactics to try to overcome the fact by denying it This antagonism is a social one, it manifests itself in classes and not in individuals The individual intellectual, like the individual capitalist, may join the proletariat in its class struggle When he does, he changes his character too It is not of *this type* of intellectual, who is still an exception among his class, that we shall mainly speak in what follows Unless otherwise stated, *I shall use the word intellectual to mean only the common run of intellectual who takes the stand of bourgeois society* and who is characteristic of the intelligentsia as a *class* This *class* stands in a certain *antagonism* to the proletariat

"This antagonism differs however from the antagonism between labour and capital The intellectual is not a capitalist True, his standard of life is bourgeois, and he must maintain it if he is not to become a pauper, but at the same time he is compelled to sell the product of his labour, and often his labour power, and he himself is often enough subjected to exploitation and social humiliation by the capitalist Hence the intellectual does not stand in any economic antagonism to the proletariat But his status of life and his conditions of labour are not proletarian, and this gives rise to a certain antagonism in sentiments and ideas

"The proletariat is a nonentity so long as he remains

* I use the words *intellectual* and *intelligentsia* to translate the German *Literat* and *Literatentum*, which not only include writers but all educated people, the members of the liberal professions in general, the brain workers, as the English call them, as distinct from manual workers

an isolated individual His strength, his progress, his hopes and expectations are entirely derived from *organization*, from systematic action in conjunction with his fellows He feels big and strong when he forms part of a big and strong organism The organism is the main thing for him, the individual in comparison means very little The proletarian fights with the utmost devotion as part of the anonymous mass, without prospect of personal advantage or personal glory, performing his duty in any post he is assigned to with a voluntary discipline which pervades all his feelings and thoughts

"Quite different is the case of the intellectual He does not fight by means of power, but by argument His weapons are his personal knowledge, his personal ability and his personal convictions He can attain to any position at all only through his personal qualities Hence the freest play for his individuality seems to him the prime condition for successful activities It is only with difficulty that he submits to being a part subordinate to a whole, and then only from necessity, not from inclination He recognizes the need of discipline only for the mass, not for the chosen few And of course he counts himself among the latter

"Nietzsche's philosophy, with its cult of the superman, for whom the fulfilment of his own individuality is everything and the subordination of that individuality to a great social aim is as vulgar as it is despicable, is the real philosophy of the intellectual, and it renders him totally unfit to take part in the class struggle of the proletariat

"Alongside with Nietzsche, the most outstanding exponent of the philosophy of the intelligentsia, a philosophy that corresponds with its sentiments, is Ibsen His Doctor Stockmann (in *An Enemy of the People*) is not a Socialist, as many have thought, but the type of the intellectual who is bound to come into conflict with the proletarian

movement, and with any movement of the people generally, as soon as he attempts to work within it. For the basis of the proletarian movement, as of every democratic movement, is respect for the majority of one's fellows. The typical intellectual à la Stockmann regards a 'compact majority' as a monster which must be overthrown.

"An ideal example of an intellectual who had become thoroughly imbued with the sentiments of the proletariat, and who, although he was a brilliant writer, had lost the specific mentality of the intellectual, marched cheerfully with the rank and file, worked in any post he was assigned to, subordinated himself wholeheartedly to our great cause, and despised the spineless whining (weiches Gewinsel) about the suppression of one's individuality which the intellectual trained on Ibsen and Nietzsche is all too prone to indulge in when he happens to be in the minority—an ideal example of such an intellectual, one the socialist movement needs, was Liebknecht. We may also mention Marx, who never forced himself to the forefront and whose party discipline in the International, where he often found himself in the minority, was exemplary."

Just such spineless whining of intellectuals who happened to find themselves in the minority, and nothing more, was the refusal of Martov and his colleagues to take up their posts only because

* It is extremely characteristic of the confusion wrought by our Martovists in all questions of organization that, though they have swung towards Akimov and a *misplaced* democracy, they are at the same time *incensed at the democratic election of the editorial board, its election at the Congress, as planned in advance by everybody!* Perhaps that is your *principle*, gentlemen?

* Karl Kautsky, "Franz Mehring," *Neue Zeit*, XXII. I S 101-03, 1903, No 4

the old circle had not been endorsed, as were their complaints of a state of siege and emergency laws "against individual groups," which were not near and dear to Martov when the *Yuzhny Rabochy* and the *Rabocheye Dyelo* were dissolved, but which meant everything to him when *his own* group was dissolved

Just such spineless whining of intellectuals who happened to find themselves in the minority was that endless torrent of complaints, reproaches, hints, accusations, slanders and insinuations regarding the "compact majority" which was started by Martov and flowed so readily at our Party Congress (and even more so after)

The minority bitterly complained that the compact majority met in private sessions. Well, the minority had to do something to conceal the unpleasant fact that the delegates it had invited to its own private meetings refused to attend, while those who would have willingly attended (the Egorovs, Makhovs and Brouckères) the minority could not invite after the struggle it had waged with them at the Congress

There were bitter complaints about the "false accusation of opportunism." Well, they had to do something to conceal the unpleasant fact that it was *precisely the opportunists*—who in most

* See pp 337, 338, 340, 352, etc., of the *Minutes of the Congress*

cases followed the anti-*Iskra*-ists—and partly these anti-*Iskra*-ists themselves, that formed the compact minority and convulsively clung to the circle spirit in Party institutions, opportunism in their argumentation, philistinism in Party affairs and the instability and wishy-washiness of the intellectual

We shall show in the next chapter what is the explanation of the highly interesting *political fact* that a “compact majority” was formed towards the end of the Congress, and why, in spite of every challenge, the minority so very, very warily *evades* the *reasons* for its formation and its *history*. But let us first finish our analysis of the Congress debates

During the elections to the Central Committee, Comrade Martov moved a highly characteristic resolution (p 336), the three main features of which I have at times referred to as “mate in three moves” Here they are 1) to ballot the *lists* of candidates to the Central Committee, and not the candidates individually; 2) after the lists had been announced, to allow two sittings to elapse (for discussion, evidently), 3) in the absence of an absolute majority, the second ballot to be regarded as final This resolution was a most carefully conceived stratagem (we must give the adversary his due!), with which Comrade Egorov did not agree (p 337), but which would *most certainly* have assured a complete victory for

Martov if the seven Bundists and "Rabocheye Dyelo"-ists had not quit the Congress The reason for this stratagem was that the *Iskra*-ist minority *did not have, and could not have had, a "direct agreement"* (such as there was among the *Iskra*-ist majority) *even with the Egorovs and the Makhovs, let alone the Bund and Brouckère*

Remember that Comrade Martov whined at the Congress of the League that the "false accusation of opportunism" presumed a direct agreement between him and the "Bund" I repeat, this only seemed so to Comrade Martov in his fright, and *this very refusal of Comrade Egorov to agree to the balloting of lists* (Comrade Egorov "had not yet lost his principles"—those principles, it must be presumed, which induced him to join forces with Goldblatt in the evaluation of the absolute importance of democratic guarantees) *graphically demonstrates the highly important fact that there could have been no question of a "direct agreement" even with Egorov* But there could have been, and there was, a *coalition* both with Egorov and with Brouckère, a coalition in the sense that the Martovists *were sure* of their support every time they, the Martovists, came into serious conflict with us, and Akimov and his friends had to choose *the lesser evil* There was not and there is not the slightest doubt that *Comrades Akimov and Lieber would certainly have voted both for six on the Central*

the Congress that they would recognize all its elections (p 300, §18 of the Congress Rules)?

Comrade Popov *subtly* hinted at this desire when he spoke at the Congress on the day of the elections and asked outright 'Is the Bureau certain that the decision of the Congress is valid and legitimate when half the delegates refused to vote?'. The Bureau of course replied that it was certain, and recalled the incident of Comrades Akimov and Martynov. Comrade Martov agreed with the Bureau and explicitly declared that Comrade Popov was mistaken and that "*the decisions of the Congress are legitimate*" (p 343). Now let the reader form his own opinion of the political consistency—highly normal, we must suppose—revealed by a comparison of *this declaration made by him in the hearing of the Party* with his behaviour after the Congress and with the phrase in *A State of Siege* about "*the revolt of half the Party which had already begun at the Congress*" (p 20). The hopes which Comrade Akimov had placed in Comrade Martov outweighed the ephemeral good intentions of Martov himself.

"*You have conquered,*" Comrade Akimov!

* * *

* P. 342 It was in reference to the election of a fifth member to the Council. Twenty-four ballots (out of a total of 44 votes) were cast, two of which were blank.

Certain features, seemingly petty but actually very important, of the *end* of the Congress, the end that *followed* the elections, may serve to show how "dreadful" was the celebrated phrase about a "state of siege" which has now forever acquired a tragicomical meaning. Comrade Martov is now making great play of this tragicomical "state of siege," seriously assuring both himself and his readers that this bugbear of his own invention implied some sort of abnormal persecution, hounding, bullying of the "minority" by the "majority." We shall presently show how matters stood *after* the Congress. But take even the end of the Congress, and you will find that *after the elections*, far from persecuting the unhappy Martovists, who are supposed to have been bullied, humiliated and led to the slaughter, the "compact majority" *themselves offered* them (through Lyadov) *two seats out of three* on the Minutes Commission (p. 354). Take the resolutions on tactical and other questions (p. 355 et seq.), and you will find that they were discussed on their merits in a purely businesslike way, and that among the signatories to the motions representatives of the monstrous compact "majority" frequently alternated with followers of the "humiliated and insulted" "minority" (*Minutes*, pp. 355, 357, 363, 365 and 367). This looks very much like "removing from work" and "bullying" in every other form, does it not?

The only interesting, but, unfortunately, all too brief, controversy in which a question was discussed on its merits arose in connection with Starover's resolution on the liberals. As one can see from the signatures to it (pp 357 and 358), it was adopted by the Congress because three of the supporters of the "majority" (Braun, Orlov and Osipov²³) voted both *for it* and for Plekhanov's resolution, not perceiving any irreconcilable contradiction between the two. No irreconcilable contradiction is apparent at a first glance, because Plekhanov's resolution lays down a general principle, outlines a definite attitude as regards both principles and tactics towards *bourgeois liberalism in Russia*, whereas Starover's attempts to define the *concrete conditions in which "temporary agreements" would be permissible* with "liberal or liberal-democratic trends" The subjects of the two resolutions are different But Starover's suffers from *political vagueness*, and is consequently petty and shallow It *does not define the class content of Russian liberalism*, it does not indicate the *definite* political trends in which it is expressed, it does not explain to the proletariat the *major* tasks of its propaganda and agitation in relation to these definite trends, it confuses (owing to its vagueness) such different things as the student movement and *Osrobozhdeniye*,²⁴ it prescribes, too shallow and casuistically, *three* concrete conditions under which "tem-

porary agreements" would be permissible Here, as in many other cases, political vagueness leads to casuistry The absence of any general principle and the attempt to enumerate "conditions" result in a petty and, strictly speaking, *incorrect* formulation of these conditions Just examine Starover's three conditions 1) "the liberal or liberal-democratic trends" must "clearly and unambiguously declare that in their struggle against the autocratic government they will resolutely side with the Russian Social-Democrats" What is the difference between the liberal and liberal-democratic trends? The resolution furnishes no material for a reply to this question Is it not that the liberal trends voice the position of the politically least progressive sections of the bourgeoisie, while the liberal-democratic trends voice the position of the more progressive sections of the bourgeoisie and of the petty bourgeoisie? If that is so, can Comrade Starover possibly think that the sections of the bourgeoisie which are least progressive (but nevertheless progressive, for otherwise there could be no talk of liberalism) can "resolutely side with the Social-Democrats"? That is absurd, and even if the spokesmen of such a trend were to "*declare so clearly and unambiguously*" (an absolutely impossible assumption), we, the party of the proletariat, *would be obliged not to believe* their declarations To be a liberal and resolutely side

with the Social-Democrats—one excludes the other

Further, let us assume a case where the "liberal and liberal-democratic trends" clearly and unambiguously declare that in their struggle against the autocracy they resolutely side with the *Socialist-Revolutionaries*. Such an assumption is far less unlikely than Comrade Starover's (owing to the bourgeois-democratic nature of the Socialist-Revolutionary trend). It follows from the meaning of his resolution, because of its vagueness and casuistry, that *in a case like this temporary agreements* with such liberals would be *impermissible*. Yet this inevitable deduction from Comrade Starover's resolution would lead to a *downright false* conclusion. Temporary agreements are permissible with the Socialist-Revolutionaries (see the resolution of the Congress on the latter), and, *consequently*, with liberals who side with the Socialist-Revolutionaries

Second condition if these trends "do not advance in their programs demands running counter to the interests of the working class or democracy in general, or demands which obscure their consciousness" Here we have the same mistake again there never have been, nor can there be, liberal-democratic trends which did not advance in their programs demands that run counter to the interests of the working class and

obscure its (the proletariat's) consciousness. Even one of the most democratic sections of our liberal-democratic trend, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, put forward in their program—a muddled program, like all liberal programs—demands that run counter to the interests of the working class and obscure its consciousness. The conclusion to be drawn from this fact is that it is *essential* “to expose the limitations and inadequacy of the bourgeois emancipation movement,” but not that temporary agreements are impermissible.

Lastly, in the general form in which it is presented, Comrade Starover's third “condition” (that the liberal-democrats should make universal, equal, secret and direct suffrage the slogan of their struggle) is *wrong* it *would be unwise* to declare impermissible in all cases temporary and partial agreements with liberal-democratic trends which put forward as their slogan the demand for a constitution with a qualified suffrage, for a “curtailed” constitution generally. As a matter of fact, the *Osvobozhdeniye* “trend” would fit in to this category, but it would be political shortsightedness incompatible with the principles of Marxism to tie one's hands in advance by forbidding “temporary agreements” even with the most timorous liberals.

To sum up Comrade Starover's resolution, to which Comrades Martov and Axelrod affixed

their signatures, is a *mistake*, and the Third Congress would be wise to rescind it. It suffers from the *political vagueness* of its theoretical and tactical position, from the casuistry of the practical "conditions" it stipulates. It *confuses two questions*: 1) the exposure of the "antirevolutionary and antiproletarian" features of *all* liberal-democratic trends and the necessity to *combat* these features, and 2) the *conditions* for temporary and partial *agreements* with any of these trends. It does not give what it should (an analysis of the class content of liberalism), and gives what it should not (a prescription of "conditions"). It is absurd in general to draw up detailed "conditions" for temporary agreements at a Party congress, when even the direct partner, the other party to such possible agreements, is unknown, and even if the other party were known, it would be a hundred times more rational to leave the definition of the "conditions" for a temporary agreement to the central institutions of the Party, as the Congress did in relation to the Socialist-Revolutionary "trend" (see Plekhanov's amendment to the end of Comrade Axelrod's resolution—*Minutes*, pp. 362 and 15).

As to the objections of the "minority" to Plekhanov's resolution, Comrade Martov's only argument was. Plekhanov's resolution "ends with the paltry conclusion that a certain writer should

be exposed. Would this not be using a sledgehammer to kill a fly?" (P. 358) This argument, whose emptiness is concealed by a smart phrase—"paltry conclusion"—provides a new specimen of pompous phrasemongering. Firstly, Plekhanov's resolution speaks of "exposing in the eyes of the proletariat the limitations and inadequacy of the bourgeois emancipation movement wherever such limitations and inadequacy manifest themselves." Hence Comrade Martov's assertion (at the League Congress, *Minutes*, p. 88) that "all attention is to be directed only to Struve, only to one liberal" is the sheerest nonsense. Secondly, to compare Mr. Struve to a "fly" when the possibility of temporary agreements with the Russian liberals is in question, is to sacrifice an elementary political truth for a smart phrase. No, Mr. Struve is not a fly, but a political magnitude, and not because he personally is such a big figure, but because of his position as the sole representative of Russian liberalism—of liberalism that is at all effectual and organized—in the illegal world. Therefore, whoever talks of the Russian liberals and of what should be the attitude of our Party towards them, and loses sight of Mr. Struve and of *Osvobozhdeniye*, is just talking for the sake of talking. Or perhaps Comrade Martov will be good enough to point to *even one single* "liberal or liberal-democratic trend" in Russia which could be even remotely compared today

with the *Osvobozhdeniye* trend? It would be interesting to see him try!²⁴

"Struve's name means nothing to the workers," said Comrade Kostrov, supporting Comrade Martov. I hope Comrade Kostrov and Comrade Martov will not be offended—but that argument is fully in the style of Akimov. It is like the argument about the proletariat in the genitive case.²⁵

To which workers does "Struve's name mean nothing" (like the name of *Osvobozhdeniye*, men-

²⁴ At the Congress of the League, Comrade Martov also adduced the following argument against Comrade Plekhanov's resolution: "The chief objection to it, the chief defect of this resolution, is that it totally ignores the fact that it is our duty, in the struggle against the autocracy, not to evade alliance with the liberal-democratic elements. Comrade Lenin would have called such a tendency a Martynov tendency. This tendency is already being manifested in the new *Iskra*." (P. 88.)

For the wealth of "gems" it contains this passage is indeed rare. 1) The phrase about *alliance* with the liberals is a sheer muddle. Nobody mentioned alliance, Comrade Martov, but only temporary or partial agreements. That is an entirely different thing. 2) If Plekhanov's resolution ignores an incredible "alliance" and speaks only of "support" in general, that is one of its merits, not a defect. 3) Perhaps Comrade Martov will take the trouble to explain what in general characterizes "Martynov tendencies"? Will he not tell us what is the relation between these tendencies and opportunism? Will he not trace the relation of these tendencies to paragraph 1 of the Rules? 4) I am just burning with impatience to hear from Comrade Martov how the "Martynov tendencies" of the "new" *Iskra* are being manifested. Do be quick, Comrade Martov, and relieve me of the torments of suspense!

tioned in Comrade Plekhanov's resolution alongside of Mr Struve)? To those who are very little acquainted, or not at all acquainted with the "liberal and liberal-democratic trends" in Russia One asks, what should have been the attitude of our Party Congress to such workers: should it have instructed Party members to acquaint these workers with the only definite liberal trend in Russia, or *should it have refrained from mentioning* a name with which the workers are little acquainted because they are little acquainted with politics? If Comrade Kostrov, having taken one step in the wake of Comrade Akimov, does not want to take another step, he will answer this question in the former sense And having answered it in the former sense, he will see how groundless his argument was *At any rate*, the words "Struve" and "*Osvobozhdeniye*" in Plekhanov's resolution *are likely to impart* much more to the workers than the words "liberal and liberal-democratic trend" in Starover's resolution

The Russian worker cannot at the present time obtain a practical acquaintance with the political trends in our liberal movement that are at all frank, except through *Osvobozhdeniye* The legal liberal literature is unsuitable for this purpose because it is so nebulous And we must as assiduously as possible (and among the broadest possible masses of workers) direct the weapon of our criticism against the followers of *Osvobo-*

zhdeniye, so that when the future revolution breaks out, the Russian proletariat may, with the real criticism of weapons, paralyze the inevitable attempts of the *Osvobozhdeniye* gentry to curtail the democratic character of the revolution

Apart from Comrade Egorov's "perplexity," mentioned above, over our "supporting" the oppositional and revolutionary movement, the debate on the resolutions offered little of interest, in fact, there was hardly any debate at all

The Congress ended with a brief reminder from the chairman that its decisions were binding on all Party members

N GENERAL PICTURE OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS THE REVOLUTIONARY AND OPPORTUNIST WINGS OF THE PARTY

Having finished our analysis of the Congress debates and voting we must now sum up, so that we may, on the basis of the *entire* Congress material, answer the following question what elements, groups and shades went to make up the final majority and minority which we saw in the elections and which were destined for a time to become the main division in our Party? It is necessary to sum up all the material relating to the shades of opinion on matters of principle, theory and tactics which the minutes of the Congress provide in such abundance. Without a general "summary," without a general picture of the Congress as a whole, and of all the principal groupings during the voting, this material is too disjointed, too disconnected, so that at first sight some groupings seem to be casual, especially to one who does not take the trouble to make an independent and comprehensive *study* of the Con-

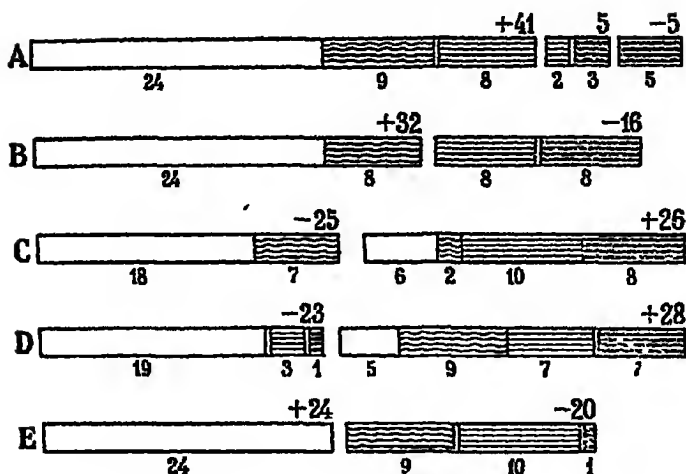
gress minutes (and how many readers have taken that trouble?).

In English parliamentary reports we often meet the characteristic word "division." The House "divided" into such and such a majority and minority—it is said when an issue is voted. The "division" of our Social-Democratic House on the various issues discussed at the Congress presents a picture of the struggle inside the Party, of its shades of opinions and groups, that *for its completeness and accuracy is unique and invaluable*. To make the picture a graphic one, to obtain a real *picture* instead of a heap of disconnected, disjointed and isolated facts and incidents, to put a stop to the endless and senseless controversies over separate votings (who voted for whom and who supported whom?), I have decided to try to depict *all the basic* types of "divisions" at our Congress in the form of a *diagram*. This will probably seem strange to a great many people, but I doubt whether any other method can be found that would really generalize and summarize the results in the most complete and accurate manner possible. Whether a particular delegate voted for or against a given motion can be determined with absolute accuracy in cases when a roll-call vote was taken, and in certain important cases, when no roll-call vote was taken, it can be determined from the minutes with a very high degree of probability, with a suffi-





cient degree of approximation to the truth. If we take into account *all* the roll-call votes and all the other votes on issues of any importance (as judged, for example, by the thoroughness and warmth of the debates), we shall obtain a picture of our inner Party struggle that will be as objective as the material at our disposal permits. In doing so, instead of trying to give a photograph, i.e., an image of each voting separately, we shall try to give a picture, i.e., to present all the main *types* of voting, ignoring relatively unimportant exceptions and variations which would only confuse matters. In any case, anybody will be able with the aid of the minutes to check every detail of our picture, to supplement it with any particular voting he likes, in a word, to criticize it not only by arguments, doubts and references to isolated cases, but by drawing a *different picture* on the basis of the same material.

In marking on the diagram every delegate who took part in the voting, we shall indicate by special shading the four main groups which we have traced in detail throughout the course of the debates at the Congress, viz., 1) the *Iskra*-ists of the majority, 2) the *Iskra*-ists of the minority, 3) the "Centre," and 4) the anti-*Iskra*-ists. We have seen the difference in shades of principle between these groups in a *host of instances*, and if anyone does not like the *names* of the groups, which remind lovers of zigzags too much of the

GENERAL PICTURE OF THE STRUGGLE AT THE CONGRESS



The plus and minus signs indicate the total number of votes cast for and against on a particular issue. The figures below the strips indicate the number of votes cast by each of the four groups. The character of the divisions covered by each of the types A to E is explained in the text.

Name of group	
	ISKRA-ISTS OF THE MAJORITY
	ISKRA-ISTS OF THE MINORITY
	CENTRE
	ANTI-ISKRA-ISTS

Martynov, Akimov, Brouckère and Makhov, the latter with two votes, the rest were with us), *it is this vote that is represented in diagram A*. Further, the *three* votes on the question of endorsing the *Iskra* as the central organ of the Party were also of this type the editors (five votes) abstained; in all the three divisions two voted against (Akimov and Brouckère) and, in addition, when the vote on the *motives* for endorsing the *Iskra* was taken, the five Bundists and Comrade Martynov abstained¹

This type of vote provides an answer to a very interesting and important question, namely, when did the Congress "Centre" vote with the *Iskra*-ists? Either when the *anti-"Iskra"-ists*, too, were with us, with a few exceptions (adoption of the program, or endorsement of the *Iskra* without the motives stated), or else when it involved the sort of *statement* which was not in itself a direct committal to a definite political position (recognition of the organizing work of the *Iskra* was not

¹ Why was the vote on §2 of the Bund rules taken as an illustration in the diagram? Because the votes on the question of endorsing the *Iskra* were less complete, while the votes on the program and on the question of federation refer to political decisions of a less clearly defined character. Speaking generally, the choice of one or another of a number of votes of the same type will not in the least affect the main features of the picture, as anyone may easily see by making the corresponding changes

in itself a committal to carry out its organizational policy in relation to particular groups; rejection of the principle of federation did not preclude abstention from voting on a specific scheme of federation, as we have seen in the case of Comrade Makhov) We have already seen, when speaking of the significance of the groupings at the Congress in general, how falsely this matter is put in the official account of the official *Iskra*, which (through the mouth of Comrade Martov) *slurs and glosses over* the difference between the *Iskra*-ists and the "Centre," between the consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats and the opportunists, by citing cases *when the anti-"Iskra"-ists, too, sided with us!* Even the most "Right-wing" of the opportunists in the German and French Social-Democratic parties never vote against such points as the *adoption of the program as a whole*

The second type of division (B) covers the cases when the *Iskra*-ists, consistent and inconsistent, voted together against all the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the entire "Centre." These were mostly cases that involved giving effect to definite and specific plans of the *Iskra* policy, of endorsing the *Iskra* in fact and not only in word They include the *Organization Committee episode*, the ques-

* It is this vote that is depicted in Diagram B the *Iskra*-ists secured thirty-two votes, the Bundist resolution sixteen It should be pointed out that *not one* of the votes

tion whether the position of the Bund in the Party should be the first item on the agenda, the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, the two votes on the agrarian program and sixthly and lastly, the vote *against* the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad (*Rabocheye Dyelo*), that is, the recognition of the League as the only Party organization abroad. In cases like these the old, pre-Party, circle spirit, the interests of the opportunist organizations or groups, the narrow conception of Marxism, came into combat with the strictly consistent principles of the policy of revolutionary Social-Democracy, the *Iskra*-ists of the minority still sided with us in a number of cases, in a number of exceedingly important votes (important from the standpoint of the Organization Committee, *Yuzhny Rabochy* and *Rabocheye Dyelo*) . until *their own* circle spirit and their own inconsistencies came on the carpet. The

of this type was *by roll-call*. The way the individual delegates voted can only be established—although to a very high degree of probability—by two sets of evidence: 1) in the debate the speakers of both groups of *Iskra*-ists spoke in favour, those of the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the Centre against, 2) the number of votes cast *in favour* was always very close to thirty-three. Nor should it be forgotten that when analyzing the debates at the Congress we pointed out, quite apart from the voting, *a number of cases* when the "Centre" sided with the anti-*Iskra*-ists (the opportunists) against us. Some of these issues were the absolute value of democratic demands, whether we should support the opposition elements, restriction of centralism, etc.

"divisions" of this type bring out with graphic clarity that on a number of issues involving the practical application of our principles, *the Centre joined forces with the anti-"Iskra"-ists*, displaying a much greater kinship with them than with us, a greater inclination *in practice* towards the *opportunist* than towards the *revolutionary* wing of Social-Democracy. Those who were *Iskra-ists in name* but were ashamed *to be Iskra-ists* revealed their true nature; and the struggle that inevitably ensued caused no little irritation which obscured from the least thoughtful and most impressionable the significance of the shades of principle that came to the surface in the course of the struggle. But now that the ardour of battle has somewhat abated and the minutes remain as an unbiased extract of a series of heated battles, only those who choose to close their eyes can fail to perceive that the alliance of the Makhovs and Egorovs with the Akimovs and Liebers was not, and could not be, casual. The only thing that remains for Martov and Axelrod is to avoid making a comprehensive and accurate analysis of the minutes, or to try at this late date to *undo* their behaviour at the Congress by all sorts of expressions of *regret*. As if regrets can remove differences of views and differences of policy! As if the present alliance of Martov and Axelrod with Akimov, Brouckère and Martynov can induce our Party, which was restored at the Second Con-

gress, to forget the struggle waged by the *Iskra*-ists with the anti-*Iskra*-ists practically all through the Congress!

The distinguishing feature of the third type of vote at the Congress, represented by the three remaining parts of the diagram (C, D and E), is that a small section of the "*Iskra*"-ists broke away and went over to the anti-"*Iskra*"-ists, who accordingly gained the victory (as long as they remained at the Congress). In order to trace with the fullest accuracy the development of this celebrated *coalition* of the *Iskra*-ist minority with the anti-*Iskra*-ists the very mention of which impelled Martov to make hysterical appeals at the Congress, we have reproduced all the three main types of *roll-call* votes of this kind. C is the vote on the equality of languages (the last of the three roll-call votes on this question is given, it being the most complete). All the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the whole Centre stood solid against us, whereas a part of the majority and a part of the minority separated from the "*Iskra*"-ists. It was not yet clear which of the "*Iskra*"-ists were capable of forming a definite and lasting coalition with the opportunistic "Right wing" of the Congress. Next comes type D—the vote on paragraph one of the Rules (of the two votes we have taken the one which was more clear cut, that is in which there were no abstentions). *The coalition stands out*

more saliently and assumes firmer shape all the *Iskra*-ists of the minority are now on the side of Akimov and Lieber, but only a very small number of *Iskra*-ists of the majority, these counterbalancing three of the "Centre" and one anti-*Iskra*-ist who had come over to our side. A mere glance at the diagram will show which elements shifted from side to side casually and temporarily and which *were drawn with irresistible force* towards a lasting coalition with the Akimovs. The last vote (E—elections to the Central Organ, the Central Committee and the Party Council), which in fact represents the final division into a majority and a minority, clearly reveals the complete fusion of the *Iskra*-ist minority with the entire "Centre" and the remnants of the anti-*Iskra*-ists. By this time, of the eight anti-*Iskra*-ists, only Comrade Brouckère remained at the Congress (Comrade Akimov had already explained his mistake to him and he had taken his proper place in the ranks of the *Martovists*). The withdrawal of

* Everything points to the fact that four other votes on the Rules were of the same type: p. 278—27 for Fomin, as against 21 for us, p. 279—26 for Martov, as against 24 for us, p. 280—27 against me, 22 for, and, on the same page, 24 for Martov, as against 23 for us. These are the votes on the question of co-option to the central bodies, which I have already dealt with. There were no roll-call votes (there was one, but the record of it has been lost). The Bundists (all or part) evidently saved Martov. Martov's erroneous statements (in the League) concerning these votes have been corrected above.

the seven *most "Right"* of the *opportunists* decided the issue of the elections against Martov.

And, now, with the aid of the objective evidence of votes of *every type*, let us sum up the results of the Congress.

There has been much talk about the "*casual*" character of the majority at our Congress. This, in fact, was Comrade Martov's sole consolation in his "Again in the Minority." The diagram clearly shows that in *one sense*, but in that one only, the majority may be called casual, viz., in the sense that the withdrawal of the seven most opportunist delegates of the "*Right*" was *casual*. Only to the extent that this withdrawal was casual (and no more) was our majority casual. A mere glance at the diagram will show better than any long argument on whose side these seven would have been, *were bound to have been*.^{**} But the question arises how far was the with-

^{*} The seven opportunists who withdrew from the Second Congress were the five Bundists (the Bund withdrew from the Party after the principle of federation had been rejected by the Congress) and two *Rabocheye Dyelo* delegates, Comrade Martynov and Comrade Akimov. These latter left the Congress after the *Iskra*-ist League had been recognized as the *only* Party organization abroad, i.e., after the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ist Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad had been dissolved (Author's footnote to the 1907 edition—Ed.)

^{**} We shall see later that *after* the Congress both Comrade Akimov and the Voronezh Committee, which has the closest *kinship* with Comrade Akimov, explicitly expressed their sympathy with the "*minority*."

drawal of the seven really casual? That is a question which those who talk freely about the "casual" character of the majority do not like to ask themselves. They find it an unpleasant question. Was it a casual thing that the most arrant representatives of the *Right* wing, and not of the *Left* wing, of our Party were the ones to withdraw? Was it a casual thing that it was *opportunists* who withdrew, and not consistent *revolutionary Social-Democrats*? Is there no connection between this "casual" withdrawal and the struggle against the opportunist wing which was waged all through the Congress and which stands out so graphically in our diagram?

One has only to ask these questions, which are so unpleasant to the minority, to realize what fact all this talk about the casual character of the majority is intended to *conceal*. It is the unquestionable and incontrovertible fact that *the minority was composed of those members of our Party who were most inclined to gravitate towards opportunism*. The minority was composed of the elements in our Party *who were the least stable in theory and the least consistent in matters of principle*. It was from the *Right wing* of the Party that the minority was formed. The division into a majority and a minority is a direct and inevitable continuation of that division of the Social-Democrats into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, into a Mountain and a

Gironde,²⁵ which did not appear only yesterday, nor in the Russian workers' party alone, and which no doubt will not disappear tomorrow

This fact is of cardinal importance for an elucidation of the causes and the various stages of our disagreements. Whoever tries to *evade* the fact by denying or glossing over the struggle at the Congress and the shades of principle that emerged in that struggle, simply testifies to his own intellectual and political poverty. But in order to *disprove* the fact, it would have to be shown, *in the first place*, that the general picture of the votes and "divisions" at our Party Congress was different from the one I have drawn; and, *in the second place*, that it was the most consistent revolutionary Social-Democrats, those who in Russia have adopted the name of *Iskra*-ists,* who *were wrong in substance* on all those

* Note for Comrade Martov's benefit. If Comrade Martov has now forgotten that the term "*Iskra*"-ist implies *the follower of a trend* and not a *member of a circle*, we would advise him to read in the minutes of the Congress the explanation given by Comrade Trotsky to Comrade Akimov on this point. There were three *Iskra*-ist circles (in relation to the Party) at the Congress: the Emancipation of Labour group, the *Iskra* editorial board and the *Iskra* organization. Two of these three circles had the good sense to dissolve themselves, the third did not display enough Party spirit to do so, and was dissolved by the Congress. The broadest of the *Iskra*-ist circles, the *Iskra* organization (which included the editorial board and the Emancipation of Labour group), had altogether six

issues over which the Congress "divided." Well, just try to show that, gentlemen!

The fact that the minority, consisted of the most opportunist, the most unstable and least consistent elements of the Party incidentally provides an answer to those numerous perplexities and objections that are addressed to the majority by people who are imperfectly acquainted with the matter, or have not given it sufficient thought. Is it not shallow, we are told, to account for the *disagreement* by a minor mistake of Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod? Yes, gentlemen, Comrade Martov's mistake was a minor one (and I said so even at the Congress, in the heat of the struggle), but this minor mistake *might* cause (and *did* cause) a lot of harm owing to the fact that Comrade Martov was pulled over to the side of delegates who had made *a series of mistakes* and had manifested an inclination towards opportunism and inconsistency of principle on a number of questions. That Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod should have displayed instability was an individual and unimportant fact; it was not an individual fact, however, but a *Party* fact, and a *not altogether unimportant one*, that

teen delegates at the Congress, of whom *only eleven* were entitled to vote. There were, I calculate, *twenty-seven delegates, with thirty-three votes*, who were *Iskra-ists* by *trend*, but who did not belong to any *Iskra* "circle." Hence, *less than half* of the *Iskra-ists* belonged to *Iskra-ist circles*.

a very considerable minority had been formed of *all* the least stable elements, of *all* who either rejected *Iskra's* trend altogether and openly opposed it, or paid lip service to it but actually sided time and again with the anti-*Iskra*-ists.

Is it not absurd to *account for* the disagreement by the prevalence of an inveterate circle spirit and revolutionary philistinism in the small circle comprised by the old *Iskra* editorial board? No, it is not absurd, because *all those in our Party* who all through the Congress had fought *for every kind of circle*, all those *who were generally incapable of rising* above revolutionary philistinism, all those who referred to the "historical" character of the philistine and circle spirit to justify and preserve that evil, *rose up* in support of *this particular circle*. The fact that narrow circle interests prevailed over the Party spirit in the one little circle of the *Iskra* editorial board may, perhaps, be regarded as casual, but it was not casual that in staunch support of this circle rose up the Akimovs and Brouckères, who attached no less (if not more) value to the "historical continuity" of the celebrated Voronezh Committee and the notorious St Petersburg "Workers'" Organization," the Egorovs, who lamented the "murder" of *Rabocheye Dyelo* as bitterly as the "murder" of the old editorial board (if not more so), the Makhovs, etc, etc. You can tell a man by his friends—the proverb says. And you can tell

a man's *political complexion* by his political allies, by the people who vote for him.

The minor mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod was, and might have remained, a *minor* one as long as it did not serve as the starting point for a *durable alliance* between them and the whole opportunist wing of our Party, as long as it did not lead, as a result of this alliance, to a *recrudescence* of opportunism, to the exaction of *revenge* by all whom *Iskra* had fought and who were now overjoyed at a chance of *venting their spleen* on the consistent adherents of revolutionary Social-Democracy. And, in fact, as a result of the post-Congress events, we are now witnessing a recrudescence of opportunism in the new *Iskra*, the exaction of revenge by the Akimovs and Brouckères (see the leaflet issued by the Voronezh Committee*), and the glee of the Martynovs, who have at last (at last!) been allowed in the detested *Iskra*, to have a kick at the detested "enemy" for all and every former grievance. This makes it particularly clear how important it was to "restore *Iskra's* old editorial board" (we are quoting from Comrade Starover's ultimatum of November 3, 1903) in order to preserve the *Iskra* "continuity"....

Taken by itself, there was nothing dreadful, nor crucial, nor even anything abnormal in the

* See pp 347-49 of this pamphlet—Ed

fact that the Congress (and the Party) had divided into a Left and a Right, a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing. On the contrary, the whole past decade in the history of the Russian (and not only of the Russian) Social-Democratic movement has been leading inevitably and inexorably to such a division. The fact that it was a number of very *minor* mistakes of the Right wing, of (relatively) very unimportant dissensions, that caused the division (a fact which seems shocking to the superficial observer and to the philistine mind), marked *a big step forward for our Party as a whole*. Formerly we used to differ over major issues, such as might even at times justify a split, now we have reached agreement on all major and important points, and are only divided by *shades*, about which we may *and should* argue, but over which it would be absurd and childish to part company (as Comrade Plekhanov has quite rightly said in his interesting article "What Should Not Be Done?" to which we shall revert) *Now* that the *anarchist behaviour* of the minority *after the Congress* has almost led the Party to a split, one may often hear wiseacres saying "Was it worth while fighting at the Congress over such trifles as the Organization Committee episode, the dissolution of the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group or the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, or §1, or the dissolution of the old editorial board, etc?"

Those who argue in this way* are in fact introducing the circle view into Party affairs: a struggle of *shades* in the Party is *inevitable and essential* as long as it does not lead to anarchy and splits, as long as it is confined *within bounds* approved by the common consent of all comrades and Party members. And *our struggle* against the Right wing of the Party *at the Congress*, against Akimov and Axelrod, Martynov and Martov, *in no way exceeded those bounds*. One need only recall two facts which prove this most incontrovertibly. 1) when Comrades Martynov and Akimov were about to leave the Congress *we were all prepared* to do everything to obliterate the idea of an "insult"; *we all adopted* (by thirty-two votes) Comrade Trotsky's motion to invite

* I cannot help recalling in this connection a conversation I happened to have at the Congress with one of the "Centre" delegates. "How oppressive the atmosphere is at our Congress!" he complained. "This bitter fighting, this agitation one against the other, this biting controversy, this uncomradely attitude!" "What a splendid thing our Congress is!" I replied. "A free and open struggle. Opinions have been stated. The shades have been brought out. The groups have taken shape. Hands have been raised. A decision has been taken. A stage has been passed. Forward! That's the stuff for me! That's life! That's not like the endless, tedious word-chopping of intellectuals which terminates not because the question has been settled, but because they are too tired to talk any more."

The comrade of the "Centre" stared at me in perplexity and shrugged his shoulders. We were talking in different languages.

these comrades to regard the explanations as satisfactory and to withdraw their statement, 2) when it came to the election of the central bodies, we were prepared to allow the minority (or the opportunist wing) of the Congress *a minority on both central bodies* Martov on the Central Organ and Popov on the Central Committee We *could not* act otherwise from the Party standpoint, since we had decided even before the Congress to elect two trios *If the difference of shades revealed at the Congress was not great*, neither was the *practical* conclusion we drew from the struggle between these shades the conclusion amounted *solely* to this, that *two-thirds* of the seats on both bodies of three ought to be given to the *majority* at the Party Congress

It was only the *refusal* of the minority at the Party Congress to be a *minority on the central bodies* that led first to the "feeble whining" of defeated intellectuals, and then to *anarchist talk* and anarchist actions.

In conclusion, let us take one more glance at the diagram from the standpoint of the composition of the central bodies Quite naturally, *in addition* to the question of shades, the delegates were faced during the elections with the question of the *suitability*, efficiency, etc., of one or another *person* The minority are now very prone to confuse these two questions Yet that they are different questions is self-evident, and may be seen

from the simple fact, for instance, that the election of an *initial* trio for the Central Organ had been planned even *before the Congress*, at a time when no one could have foreseen the alliance of Martov and Axelrod with Martynov and Akimov. Different questions have to be answered in different ways: the answer to the question of shades must be sought for in the *minutes of the Congress*, in the *open* discussions and voting on each and every issue. As to the question of the suitability of *persons*, everybody at the Congress had decided that it should be settled by *secret ballot*. Why did *the whole Congress* take that decision *unanimously*? The question is so elementary that it would be odd to dwell on it. But (since their defeat at the ballot box) the minority have begun to forget even rudimentary things. We have heard torrents of ardent, passionate speeches, heated almost to the point of irresponsibility, in defence of the old editorial board, but we have heard *absolutely nothing* about the shades *at the Congress* that were associated with the struggle for a board of six or three. We hear talk and gossip on all sides about the inefficiency, the unsuitability, the evil designs, etc., of the persons elected to the Central Committee, but we hear *absolutely nothing* about the shades which fought *at the Congress* for predominance on the Central Committee. To me it seems indecent and undignified to go about talking and gossiping *outside the Congress*.

about the qualities and actions of individuals (for in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred these actions are a secret of the organization, which can only be divulged to the supreme institution of the Party). To carry on the fight *outside the Congress* by means of *such gossip* is, in my opinion, *scandalmongering*. And the only public reply I could make to all this talk is to point to the struggle at the Congress. You say that the Central Committee was elected by a narrow majority. That is true. But this narrow majority consisted of all who most consistently fought not in words but in actual fact for the realization of the *Iskra* plans. Consequently, the *moral* prestige of this majority should be incomparably higher than its *formal* prestige—higher in the eyes of all who set greater value on the continuity of the *Iskra* trend than on the continuity of any *Iskra* circle. Who was *most competent to judge* the suitability of particular persons to carry out the *Iskra* policy? Was it those who fought for that policy at the Congress, or those who in quite a number of cases fought against that policy and defended everything retrograde, every kind of rubbish, every kind of circle spirit?

O AFTER THE CONGRESS. TWO METHODS OF STRUGGLE

The analysis of the debates and votes at the Congress, which we have now concluded, explains *in nuce* (in embryo), so to speak, *everything that has transpired since the Congress*, and we can now be brief in outlining the subsequent stages of our Party crisis

The refusal of Martov and Popov to stand for election immediately introduced an atmosphere of *squabbling* into a Party struggle between Party shades. On the very next day after the conclusion of the Congress, Comrade Glebov, thinking it incredible that the unelected editors could have seriously decided to *swing over* to Akimov and Martynov, and attributing the whole thing primarily to irritation, suggested to Plekhanov and me that the matter should be ended peaceably and that all the four should be "co-opted" on condition that the editorial board's representation on the Council be guaranteed (i.e., that of the two representatives, one should necessarily belong to

the *Party* majority). This condition seemed reasonable enough to Plekhanov and me, for its acceptance would imply *a tactt admission of the mistake at the Congress*, a desire for peace instead of war, a desire to be closer to Plekhanov and me than to Akimov and Martynov, to Egorov and Makhov. Thus the concession as regards "cooption" acquired a *personal* character, and it was not worth while refusing to make a personal concession which was to clear away the irritation and restore peace. Plekhanov and I therefore consented. But the editorial board majority rejected the condition. *Glebov left*. We began to wait and see what would happen next: whether Martov would adhere to the loyal position he had taken at the Congress (*against* Comrade Popov, the representative of the Centre), or whether the unstable elements who were inclined to a split, and in whose wake he had followed, would gain the upper hand.

We were faced with a dilemma: would Comrade Martov choose to regard his Congress "coalition" as an isolated political fact (just as, *si licet parva componere magnis*,^{*} Bebel's coalition with Vollmar in 1895 was an isolated case), or would he want to *consolidate* this coalition, make every effort to prove that it was *Plekhanov and I* who had made a mistake at the Congress, and

* If little things may be compared to big —Tr

become the full-fledged leader of the opportunist wing of our Party? This dilemma might be formulated otherwise as follows: a squabble or a political Party struggle? Of the three of us, who on the day after the Congress were the sole available members of the central institutions, Glebov was most inclined to accept the first answer to the dilemma, and made the most efforts to reconcile the children who had fallen out. Comrade Plekhanov, who was adamant, so to speak, was most inclined to accept the second answer. This time I acted the "Centre," or "Marsh," and endeavoured to employ persuasion. To try at present to recall the spoken attempts at persuasion would be an intricate and hopeless task, and I shall not follow the bad example of Comrade Martov and Comrade Plekhanov. But I do consider it necessary to reproduce certain passages from one written attempt at persuasion which I addressed to a member of the *Iskra* "minority".

" The refusal of Martov to join the editorial board, his refusal and that of other Party writers to collaborate, the refusal of a number of persons to work on the Central Committee, and the propaganda of a boycott or passive resistance are bound to lead, even if against the wishes of Martov and his friends, to a split in the Party. Even if Martov were to adhere to a loyal stand (as he once did so resolutely at the Congress), others will not, and the outcome I have mentioned will be inevitable .

". And so I ask myself over what, properly speaking, are we about to part company?. . I go over all the

events and impressions of the Congress, I admit that I often behaved and acted in a state of frightful irritation 'frenziedly', I am quite willing to admit this guilt of mine to anybody, if one can call guilt what was a natural product of the atmosphere, the reactions, the interjections, the struggle, etc. But examining now, quite unirenziedly, the results attained and what has been achieved by frenzied struggle, I can detect nothing, absolutely nothing in these results that is injurious to the Party and absolutely nothing that is offensive or insulting to the minority.

"Of course, the mere fact of finding oneself in the minority could not but be vexatious, but I categorically protest against the idea that we 'cast slurs' on anybody, that we *wanted* to offend or humiliate anybody. Nothing of the kind. And we should not allow political differences to lead to an interpretation of events based on accusing the other side of unscrupulousness, chicanery, intrigue and the other charming things we are hearing more and more often in this atmosphere of an impending split. This should not be allowed, for it would be, to say the least, the *nec plus ultra* of irrationality.

"Martov and I have had a political (and organizational) difference, as we had had dozens of times before. Having been defeated over §1 of the Rules, I could not but strive with all my might for revenge in that which remained to me (and to the Congress). I could not but strive, on the one hand, for a strictly *Iskra* Central Committee, and, on the other, for a trio on the editorial board. . . I consider this trio the *only* one capable of being an authoritative institution, instead of a body based on indulgence and slackness the only one to be a real centre, each member of which would always state and defend his Party viewpoint, and not one grain more, irrespective of all personal considerations and all fear of giving offence, of resignations, and so on.

"This trio, after what occurred at the Congress, undoubtedly would have had the effect of legitimatizing a

nite line *at once* between possible personal grievances and personal irritation (which are inevitable in a heated struggle) caused by biting and "frenzied" attacks and so on, on the one hand, and a definite political mistake, a definite political line (coalition with the Right wing), on the other.

These statements show that the *passive resistance* of the minority *began immediately after the Congress* and at once evoked from us the warning that it was a *step towards splitting the Party*; that it ran directly counter to the *declarations of loyalty made at the Congress*; that the split would be solely and exclusively *due to the fact that somebody had been removed from the central institutions* (that is, not elected to them), for it had never occurred to anybody to remove any of the Party members *from work*; and that our political difference (an inevitable difference, inasmuch as it had not yet been ascertained and settled which line at the Congress was mistaken, Martov's or ours) was being *more and more distorted into a squabble*, accompanied by abuse, suspicions, and so on and so forth

But the warnings were in vain. The behaviour of the minority showed that the least stable elements among them, those who *least valued the Party*, were gaining the upper hand. This compelled Plekhanov and me to withdraw the consent we had given to Glebov's proposal. For, in-

deed, if the minority were demonstrating by their *deeds* their political instability not only as regards principles, but even as regards *elementary Party loyalty*, what would be the value of the *talk* about this celebrated "continuity"? Nobody scoffed more wittily than Plekhanov at the utter absurdity of demanding the "co-option" to the Party editorial board of a majority consisting of people who frankly proclaimed their new and growing differences of opinion! Has there ever been a case in the world of a party majority on the central institutions converting itself of its own free will into a minority *before the new* differences *were aired* in the press, in the sight of the Party? Let the differences first be stated, let the Party judge how profound and important they are, let the Party itself correct the mistake it made at the Second Congress, if it be shown that it did make a mistake! The very fact that such a demand was made *on the plea* of still unknown differences demonstrated the utter instability of those who made it, the complete submersion of political differences by squabbling, and their utter disrespect both for the entire Party and for their own convictions. Never have there been, nor will there be, men of *convinced principle* who refuse to try *to convince* before they secure (*privately*), a majority in the institution they want to win over to their standpoint

Finally, on October 4, Comrade Plekhanov

announced that he would make a *last* attempt to put an end to this absurd state of affairs. A meeting was called of all the six members of the old editorial board attended by a member of the new Central Committee.* For three whole hours Comrade Plekhanov tried to show how unreasonable was the demand to "co-opt" four of the "minority" to two of the "majority." He proposed that *two be co-opted*, so as, on the one hand, to remove all fears that we wanted to "bully," suppress, besiege, execute or bury anybody, and, on the other, to safeguard the rights and the position of the Party "majority." *The co-option of two was likewise rejected*

On October 6, Plekhanov and I wrote the following official letter to all the old editors of the *Iskra* and to Comrade Trotsky, one of its contributors:

"Dear Comrades,

"The Editorial Board of the Central Organ deems it its duty officially to express its regret that you are refraining from collaborating on the *Iskra* and the *Zarya*." In spite of the repeated invitations to collaborate which we made to you immediately after the Second Party Congress and several times since, we have not received a single contribution from you. The editors of the Central Organ wish to state that they consider that your refraining

* This member of the Central Committee²³ arranged, in addition, a number of private and collective conversations with the minority at which he refuted the naive tales that were being spread and appealed for fidelity to Party duty.

from collaborating is not justified by anything they have done. No personal irritation should, of course, serve as an obstacle to your working on the Central Organ of the Party. If, however, you are refraining because your views differ from ours on any issue, we would consider it of the greatest benefit to our Party if you were to set forth these differences at length. More, we would consider it highly desirable for the nature and depth of these differences to be explained to the whole Party as early as possible in the columns of the publications of which we are the editors!"*

As the reader sees, it was still quite unclear to us whether the actions of the "minority" were being governed by personal irritation or by a desire to direct the organ (and the Party) along a *new course*, and if so, what exactly was this course to be. I think that if we were even now to set seventy wise men to elucidate this question with the help of any literature or any testimony you like, they too would fail to make head or tail of this tangle. I doubt whether a squabble can ever be disentangled; you have either to cut it, or to keep aloof from it.

The letter to Comrade Martov contained an additional reference to a certain pamphlet and the following sentence: "Finally, in the interests of the work, we again notify you that even at this juncture we are prepared to co-opt you to the Editorial Board of the Central Organ, in order to give you every opportunity officially to state and defend your own views in the Party's highest institution."

Comrade Plekhanov would probably have added "or satisfy *all and every claim* of the initiators of the squabble." We shall see why this was impossible.

Axelrod, Zasulich, Starover, Trotsky and Koltsov sent a couple of lines in reply to this letter of October 6, to the effect that the undersigned were taking no part in the *Iskra* ever since it had passed into the hands of the new editorial board. Comrade Martov was more communicative and honoured us with the following reply.

"To the Editorial Board of the Central Organ of the RSDLP

"Dear Comrades,

"In reply to your letter of October 6 I wish to state the following: I consider all our discussions on the subject of working together on one organ ended after the conference which took place in the presence of a member of the Central Committee on October 4, and at which you refused to reply to the question regarding the reasons which induced you to withdraw your proposal that Axelrod, Zasulich, Starover and I should join the editorial board on condition that we undertake to elect Comrade Lenin our 'representative' on the Council. After you repeatedly evaded at this conference formulating your own statements, made in the presence of witnesses, I do not deem it necessary to explain in a letter to you my motives for refusing to work on the *Iskra* in the present circumstances. Should the need arise, I shall explain my motives in detail to the whole Party, which will be able to learn even from the minutes of the Second Congress why I rejected the proposal, which you now repeat, that I accept a seat on the Editorial Board and on the Council. . *

"L. Martov"

* I omit what Martov replied in reference to his pamphlet which was then being republished.

This letter, taken in conjunction with the previous documents, furnishes an undeniable commentary on that question of boycott, disorganization, anarchy and preparations for a split which Comrade Martov (with the help of exclamation marks and rows of dots) so assiduously evades in his *A State of Siege*—the question of loyal and unloyal methods of struggle.

Comrade Martov and the others are *invited* to set forth their differences, they are *asked* to tell us plainly what the trouble is all about and what their intentions are, they are *exhorted* to stop sulking and to analyze calmly the mistake they made in connection with §1 (which is intimately connected with the mistake they made in swinging to the Right)—but Comrade Martov and Co. *refuse to talk*, and cry: "We are being besieged We are being bullied!" The jibe about "dreadful words" has not cooled the ardour of these comical outcries.

Why, how can you *besiege* a man who *refuses to work together with you*?—we asked Comrade Martov How can you ill-treat, "bully" and persecute a minority which *refuses to be a minority*? Being in a minority is necessarily and inevitably accompanied by certain disadvantages. These disadvantages are that you either have to join a body which will outnumber you on certain questions, or you stay outside that body and

attack it, and consequently come under the fire of well-mounted batteries

Did Comrade Martov's cries about a "state of siege" mean that they in the minority were being fought or governed unjustly and unloyally? *Only* such an assertion could have contained even a grain of sense (in the eyes of Martov), for, I repeat, being in the minority is necessarily and inevitably accompanied by certain disadvantages. But the whole comedy of the situation is that Comrade Martov could *not be fought* as long as he refused to talk! The minority could *not be governed* as long as they refused to remain in the minority!

Comrade Martov did not cite a *single fact* to show that the editorial board of the Central Organ had exceeded or abused its powers while Plekhanov and I were on it. Nor did the practical workers of the minority cite *a single fact* of a like kind with regard to the Central Committee. However Comrade Martov may now wriggle and squirm in his *A State of Siege*, it remains an absolutely irrefutable fact that the *outcries about a state of siege contained absolutely nothing but "feeble whining"*

The complete absence of *sensible* arguments on the part of Comrade Martov and Co. against the editorial board appointed by the Congress is best of all shown by their own catchword "We are not serfs!" (*A State of Siege*, p. 34) The

mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, who regards himself as one of the "chosen few" standing above mass organization and mass discipline, is expressed here with remarkable clarity. To *explain* their refusal to work in the Party on the grounds that they "are not serfs" means *giving themselves away completely*, confessing to a complete lack of arguments, to utter inability to furnish any motives, any sensible reasons for dissatisfaction Plekhanov and I declare that their refusal is not justified by anything we have done and request them to set forth their differences, and all they reply is: "We are not serfs" (adding that no bargain has yet been reached on the subject of co-option).

It seems to the individualism of the intelligentsia, which had already manifested itself in the dispute over §1 by revealing a weakness for opportunist argument and anarchist phrasemongering, that *all* proletarian organization and discipline is *serfdom*. The reading public will soon learn that in the eyes of these "Party members" and Party "officials" even the new *Party Congress* is a serf institution that is terrible and abhorrent to the "chosen few"... This "institution" is indeed terrible to people who are not averse to appropriating the title of Party member but experience an *incompatibility* between this title and the interests and will of the Party

The resolutions of the committees which are

enumerated in my letter to the editorial board of the new *Iskra* and which were published by Comrade Martov in *A State of Siege*, actually show that the behaviour of the minority amounted all along to sheer *disobedience* of the decisions of the Congress and *disorganization* of positive practical work. Consisting of opportunists and people who detest the *Iskra*, the minority strove to *rend the Party*, to damage and disorganize its work, thirsting to avenge their defeat at the Congress and sensing that they would *never* succeed by *honest and loyal* means (by explaining their case in the press or at a Congress) in refuting the accusation of opportunism and intellectualist instability levelled against them at the Second Congress. Realizing that it was beyond their ability to *convince* the Party, they tried to gain their ends by *disorganizing* the Party and *hampering all its work*. They were reproached with having (by their mistakes at the Congress) caused a crack in our pot, they retaliated to the reproach by trying *with all their might to smash* the already cracked pot *altogether*.

They had confused their ideas to such an extent that boycott and refusal to collaborate were proclaimed to be "*honest*" methods of struggle. Comrade Martov is now wriggling all

* Mining Area resolution (*A State of Siege*, p 38)

around this delicate point Comrade Martov is such a "man of principle" that he defends boycott .. when conducted by the minority, but condemns boycott when, his side happening to have become the majority, it menaces Martov himself!

We need not, I think, go into the question whether this is a squabble or a "difference of principle" as to what are honest methods of struggle in a Social-Democratic Labour Party.

After the unsuccessful attempts (of October 4 and 6) to obtain an explanation from the comrades who had started the row over "co-option," nothing remained for the central institutions but to wait and see what would come of their verbal assurances that they would adhere to loyal methods of struggle. On October 10, the Central Committee addressed a circular letter to the League (see *League Minutes*, pp 3-5), announcing that it was engaged in drafting rules and inviting the members of the League to assist. The administration of the League had at that time declined to call a congress of that body (by two votes to one, *ibid*, p. 20) The replies received from supporters of the minority to this circular showed at once that the celebrated promise to be loyal and to abide by the decisions of the Congress was just talk, that, as a matter of fact, the minority had positively decided *not*

to obey the central institutions of the Party, replying to their appeals to collaborate with *evasive excuses* full of sophistry and *anarchist phrasemongering*. In reply to the famous open letter of Deutsch, a member of the administration (p 10), Plekhanov, myself and other supporters of the majority expressed our vigorous "protest against the gross violations of Party discipline with the help of which an official of the League permits himself to hamper the organizational activities of a Party institution and calls upon other comrades likewise to violate discipline and the Rules. Remarks such as, 'I do not consider myself entitled to take part in such work on the invitation of the Central Committee,' or, 'comrades, we must under no circumstances allow it (the Central Committee) to draw up new rules for the League,' etc., are agitational methods of a kind that can only arouse disgust in anybody who has any conception at all of the meaning of the words Party, organization and Party discipline. Methods of this sort are all the more disgusting for the fact that they are being employed against a Party institution that has just been set up and are therefore an undoubted attempt to undermine confidence in the latter among Party comrades, and are moreover being circulated under the tab of a member of the League administration and behind the back of the Central Committee" (P 17)

Under such conditions, the League Congress promised to be no more than a disorderly row.

Comrade Martov continued from the very outset to pursue his Congress tactics of "probing into the souls of others," this time of Comrade Plekhanov, by distorting private conversations. Comrade Plekhanov protested, and Comrade Martov was obliged to withdraw his accusations (*League Minutes*, pp 39 and 134) which were a product either of frivolity or exasperation.

The time for the report arrived. I had been the League's delegate at the Party Congress. A mere reference to the summary of my report (p 43 et seq) will show the reader that I gave a rough outline of the analysis of the voting at the Congress which, in greater detail, forms the contents of the present pamphlet. The central purpose of the report was to show that, owing to their mistakes, Martov and Co had landed in the opportunist wing of our Party. Although this report was made to an audience whose majority consisted of highly incensed opponents, they could discover absolutely nothing in it which departed from loyal methods of Party struggle and controversy.

Martov's report, on the contrary, apart from minor "corrections" to particular points of my statement (the incorrectness of these corrections we have already shown above), was nothing but—a product of disordered nerves.

No wonder that the majority refused to carry on the fight in this atmosphere Comrade Plekhanov entered a protest against the "scene" (p 68)—it was indeed a regular "scene"!—and withdrew from the Congress, refusing to state the objections on the substance of the report which he had already drawn up Nearly all the remaining supporters of the majority likewise withdrew from the Congress, after filing a written protest against the "unworthy behaviour" of Comrade Martov (*League Minutes*, p 75)

The methods of struggle employed by the minority became perfectly clear to all We had accused the minority of committing a political mistake at the Congress, of having swung towards opportunism and of having formed a coalition with the Bundists, the Akimovs, the Brouckères, the Egorovs and the Makhovs The minority were defeated at the Congress, and they have now "worked out" *two* methods of struggle which include an endless variety of sorties, assaults, attacks, etc

First method—disorganizing the whole Party work, damaging the cause, and hampering all and everything "without reasons stated"

Second method—making "scenes," and so on and so forth *

* I have already pointed out that it would be unwise to attribute to sordid motives even the most sordid manifestations of the squabbling that is so habitual in the

This second "method of struggle" is to be observed again in the League's famous resolutions of "principle," in the discussion of which the "majority," of course, took no part. Let us examine these resolutions, which Comrade Martov has reproduced in his *A State of Siege*.

The first resolution, signed by Comrades Trotsky, Fomin, Deutsch and others, contains two theses directed against the "majority" at the Party Congress: 1) "The League expresses its profound regret that, owing to the manifestation at the Congress of tendencies which essentially run counter to the earlier policy of the *Iskra*, due care was not given in drafting the Party Rules to providing sufficient guarantees to safeguard the independence and authority of the Central Committee" (*League Minutes*, p. 83)

As we have already seen, this thesis of "principle" amounts to nothing but *Akimov* talk, the *opportunist* character of which was exposed at the Party Congress *even* by Comrade Popov! As a matter of fact, the statement that the "majority" has no thought of safeguarding the independence and authority of the Central Committee has never been anything but *gossip*. It

atmosphere political refugees and exiles live in. It is a sort of epidemic disease induced by abnormal conditions of life, disordered nerves, and so on. I *had*-to give a true picture of this system of struggle here, because Comrade Martov has *again* resorted to it in its full scope in his "*A State of Siege*"

eed only be mentioned that when Plekhanov and I were on the editorial board the Central Organ enjoyed *no* predominance over the Central Committee *on the Council*, but when the Martovists joined the editorial board the Central Organ *secured* predominance over the Central Committee on the Council! When we were on the editorial board *the people engaged in the practical work in Russia predominated* on the Council over the writers residing abroad, whereas the contrary has been the case ever since the Martovists joined the editorial board. When we were on the editorial board the Council *never once* attempted to interfere in any *practical* matter, whereas since the unanimous co-option *such interference has begun*, as the reading public will learn for certain in the near future.

Next thesis of the resolution under examination "when constituting the official central bodies of the Party the Congress ignored the need for maintaining continuity with the factually existing central bodies "

This thesis boils down to nothing but a question of the *personal* composition of the central bodies. The "minority" preferred to evade the fact that at the Congress the old central bodies had proved their unfitness and had committed a number of mistakes. But most comical of all is the reference to "continuity" in respect to the Organization Committee. At the Congress, as we

have seen, nobody even hinted that the entire membership of the Organization Committee be endorsed. At the Congress, Martov wrought himself into a frenzy, declaring that he was disgraced by the list containing three members of the Organization Committee. At the Congress, the *final* list proposed by the "minority" contained *one* member of the Organization Committee (*Popov*, *Glebov* or *Fomin*, and *Trotsky*), whereas the list the "majority" put through contained *two* members of the Organization Committee out of three (*Travinsky*, *Vasilyev*, and *Glebov*). We ask, can this reference to "continuity" really be considered a "difference of principle"?

Let us pass to the second resolution, which was signed by four members of the old editorial board, headed by Comrade Axelrod. Here we find all those major accusations against the "majority" which have subsequently been repeated many times in the press. They can be most conveniently examined as formulated by the members of the editorial circle. The accusations are levelled against the "system of autocratic and bureaucratic government of the Party," against "bureaucratic centralism," which, as distinct from "truly Social-Democratic centralism," is defined as follows: it "places in the forefront, not internal union, but external, formal unity, achieved and maintained by purely mechanical means, by the systematic suppression of individual initiative and independ-

ent social activity"; therefore "by its very nature, it is incapable of organically uniting the component elements of society."

What "society" Comrade Axelrod and Co. are here referring to, heaven alone knows. Apparently, even Comrade Axelrod himself was not quite clear whether he was penning a Zemstvo address on the subject of desirable government reforms, or pouring forth the complaints of the "minority." What *meaning can be attached* to "autocracy" in the Party, about which the dissatisfied "editors" are howling? Autocracy means the supreme, uncontrolled, non-accountable and unelected rule of one individual. It is all too well known from the literature of the "minority" that by autocrat they mean *me*, and nobody else. When the resolution in question was being drafted and adopted, I was on the Central Organ together with Plekhanov. Consequently, Comrade Axelrod and Co. are expressing the conviction that Plekhanov and all the members of the Central Committee "governed the Party," not in accordance with what they considered beneficial to the cause, but in accordance with the *will* of the autocrat Lenin. This accusation of autocratic government necessarily and inevitably implies the admission that all the members of the governing body except the autocrat were mere tools in the hands of another, mere pawns and agents of another's will. And once again we ask, is this

really a "difference of principle" on the part of the most worthy Comrade Axelrod?

Further, what external, formal unity were they here talking about, our "Party members" who had just returned from a Party Congress whose decisions they had solemnly proclaimed to be legitimate? Do they happen to know of any other method of achieving unity in a party organized on any at all durable basis, except a party congress? If they do, why have they not the courage to declare frankly that they no longer regard the Second Congress as valid? Why do they not try to expound their new ideas and new methods of achieving unity in a supposed party that is supposedly organized?

Further, what "suppression of individual initiative" were they talking about, our individualist intellectuals whom the Central Organ of the Party had just prior to this *exhorted* to set forth their differences, but who began *instead* to bargain about "co-option"? And, generally speaking, how could Plekhanov and I, or the Central Committee suppress the initiative and independent activity of people who refused to engage in *any* "activity" in conjunction with us! How can anyone be "suppressed" in an institution or body in which he *refuses to have any part*? How can the unelected editors complain of a "system of government" when they refuse *"to be governed"*? We *could not* have committed *any* errors

in directing our comrades for the simple reason that they never worked under our direction

It is clear, I think, that the cries about this celebrated bureaucracy are just a screen for dissatisfaction with the personal composition of the central bodies, a fig leaf to conceal the violation of a promise solemnly made at the Congress. You are a bureaucrat because you were appointed by the Congress not on my will, but against it, you are a formalist because you take your stand on the formal decisions of the Congress, and not on my consent, you are acting in a grossly mechanical way, because you plead the "mechanical" majority at the Party Congress and pay no heed to my wish to be co-opted, you are an autocrat, because you refuse to hand over the power to the old snug little band who insist on their "continuity" as a circle all the more because of the fact that they do not like the explicit disapproval of this circle spirit by the Congress

There is no *real* meaning, nor has there ever been, in these outbursts about bureaucracy except the one I have mentioned*. And this method of struggle only shows up the minority once more for the unstable intellectuals they are. They

* It is enough to state that Comrade Plekhanov has ceased to be a supporter of "bureaucratic centralism" in the eyes of the minority ever since he put through the benevolent co-optation

wanted to convince the Party that the selection of the central bodies was unfortunate. By what method? By criticism of the *Iskra* as conducted by Plekhanov and me? No, they were unable to offer such criticism. They sought to convince by a section of the Party refusing to work under the direction of the detested central bodies. But no central institution of any party anywhere in the world can prove its ability to direct people who refuse to accept its direction. Refusal to accept the direction of the central bodies is tantamount to a refusal to remain in the Party, it is tantamount to disrupting the Party, it is a method of *destroying*, not of convincing. And these efforts to destroy instead of to convince indicate their lack of consistent principles, their lack of faith in their own ideas.

They talk of bureaucracy. Bureaucracy might be interpreted as place-hunting. Bureaucracy means subordinating the interests of a *cause* to the interests of one's own *career*, it means paying profound attention to *places* and ignoring the work itself, it means scrapping for *co-option* instead of fighting for *ideas*. That bureaucracy of this kind is undesirable and detrimental to the Party is unquestionably true, and I can safely leave it to the reader to judge which of the two sides now contending in our Party is guilty of such bureaucracy. . . They talk about grossly mechanical methods of achieving unity. Un-

questionably, grossly mechanical methods are detrimental, but I again leave it to the reader to judge whether a grosser and more mechanical method of struggle of a new trend against an old can be imagined than that of giving seats in Party institutions to people before the Party has been convinced of the correctness of their new views, and before these views have been expounded to the Party?

But perhaps these catchwords so favoured by the minority have a certain amount of value in principle, perhaps they express some special body of ideas, irrespective of the petty and minor cause which undoubtedly started the "swing" in the present case? Perhaps if we were to abstract ourselves from the scrapping over "co-option," these catchwords might turn out to be an expression of a different system of views?

Let us examine the matter from this angle. Before doing so, we must place on record that the first to make an attempt at such an examination was Comrade Plekhanov, when he pointed out in the League that the minority had swung towards *anarchism* and *opportunism*, and that Comrade Martov (who is now highly offended because not everyone is ready to admit that his position is one of principle*) preferred *complete-*

* There is nothing more comical than the new *Iskra's* grievance that Lenin, as it claims, refuses to see any differences of principle, or denies them. If your attitude had

ly to ignore this incident in his 'A State of Siege.

The general question was raised at the Congress of the League whether rules that the League or a committee may draw up for itself are valid without the endorsement of the Central Committee, and even in spite of the Central Committee. Nothing could be clearer, it would seem rules are a formal expression of organization, and, according to §6 of our Party Rules, the right to organize committees is explicitly vested in the Central Committee, rules define the limits of autonomy of a committee, and the decisive voice in defining these limits belongs to the central and not a local institution of the Party. *That is rudimentary*, and it was sheer childishness to argue with such an air of pro-

been based more on principle, you would have the sooner examined my repeated statements that you have swung towards opportunism. If your position had been based more on principle, the less would you have degraded an ideological struggle to a squabble over places. You have only yourselves to blame, for you yourselves have done everything to make it impossible to regard you as men of principle. Take Comrade Martov, for example when speaking, in *A State of Siege*, of the League Congress he says nothing about the dispute with Plekhanov over anarchism, but he does say that Lenin is a super-centre, that Lenin has only to wink his eye to have the centre issue orders, that the Central Committee has ridden roughshod over the League, etc. Far be it from me to doubt that precisely by selecting this topic, Comrade Martov displayed the profundity of his ideals and principles.

undity that "organizing" does not always imply "endorsing rules" (as if the League itself had not of its own accord expressed the wish to be organized on the basis of formal rules). But Comrade Marlov has forgotten (temporarily, let us hope) even the ABC of Social-Democracy. In his opinion, the demand that rules should be endorsed only indicated that the "earlier, revolutionary *Iskra* centralism is being replaced by bureaucratic centralism" (*League Minutes*, p 95), and there, in fact—Comrade Marlov declared in the same speech—lay the "principle" at issue (p 96)—a principle which he preferred to ignore in his *A State of Siege*.

Comrade Plekhanov answered Marlov at once, requesting that expressions like bureaucracy, pompadour, etc., be refrained from as "detracting from the dignity of the Congress" (p 96). There followed an interchange of remarks with Comrade Martov, who regarded these expressions as "a characterization of the principles of a certain trend." *At that time*, Comrade Plekhanov, like all the other supporters of the majority, took these expressions at their real value, clearly realizing that they related to the realm of "co-option," and not of principle, if we may so put it. However, he deferred to the insistence of the Martovs and Deutsches (pp 96-97) and proceeded to examine these supposed principles *from the point of view of principle*. "If that were so," said he (that is, if

the committees were autonomous in forming their organizations and drawing up their rules), "they would be autonomous in relation to the whole, to the Party That is not even a Bundist view, it is a downright anarchist view. That is just how the anarchists argue the rights of individuals are unlimited; they may conflict, every individual determines the limits of his rights for himself. The limits of autonomy should be determined not by the group itself, but by the whole of which it forms a part The Bund was a striking instance of the violation of this principle Hence, the limits of autonomy are determined by the Congress, or by the highest body set up by the Congress The authority of a central institution should rest on moral and intellectual prestige There I, of course, agree Every representative of the organization must be concerned for the moral prestige of its institution But it does not follow that, while prestige is necessary, authority is not. . To oppose the power of authority to the power of ideas is anarchist talk, which should have no place here" (P 98) These principles are as elementary as can be, they are in fact axioms, which it was even strange to have put to the vote (p 102), and which were subjected to doubt only because "concepts have now been confused" (*loc cit*) But their intellectualist individualism inevitably drove the minority to the point of wishing to disrupt the Congress and to refuse to

submit to the majority. And this wish could not be justified except by *anarchist talk*. It is very amusing to note that the minority had nothing to offer in reply to Plekhanov but *complaints* of his use of excessively strong words, like opportunism, anarchism and so forth. Plekhanov quite rightly poked fun at these complaints by asking why "the words Jaurèsism and anarchism are out of order and the words *lèse-majesté* and pompadourism permissible." No answer was given. This strange sort of *qui pro quo* often happens to Comrades Martov, Axelrod and Co.; their new catchwords clearly bear the stamp of vexation, yet any reference to the fact offends them—they are, you see, men of principle. But, they are told, if you deny that the part should submit to the whole *on principle*, you are anarchists. And again they find the expression too strong, and are offended! In other words, they want to give battle to Plekhanov, but only on condition that he does not hit back in earnest!

How many times have Comrade Martov and other "Mensheviks" no less childishly detected me in the following "contradiction." They quote a passage from *What Is To Be Done?* or from *A Letter to a Comrade* where ideological influence, a struggle for influence, etc., are spoken of, and contrast it to the "bureaucratic" method of influencing with the help of rules, to the "autocratic" tendency to rely on authority and the like.

How naive they are! They have already forgotten that *formerly* our Party was not a formally organized whole, but only the sum of separate groups, and therefore, no other relations except those of ideological influence were possible between these groups. *Now* we have become an organized Party, and this implies the establishment of authority, the transformation of the power of ideas into the power of authority, the subordination of lower Party bodies to higher Party bodies. Why, it even makes one uncomfortable to have to masticate such rudimentary ideas for the benefit of one's old comrades, especially when one feels that the whole thing boils down to the reluctance of the minority to submit to the majority in the matter of the elections! But *from the standpoint of principle*, these endless exposures of my contradictions boil down to *nothing but* anarchist talk. The new *Iskra* is not averse to enjoying the title and rights of a Party institution, but it is reluctant to submit to the majority of the Party.

If the talk about bureaucracy contains any principle at all, if it is not just an anarchist denial of the duty of the part to submit to the whole, then what we have is the *principle of opportunism*, which strives to lessen the responsibility of individual intellectuals to the party of the proletariat, to lessen the influence of the central institutions, to enlarge the autonomy of the least consistent elements in the Party, to reduce organiza-

tional relations to a purely platonic acceptance of them in word only. We have seen this at the Party Congress, where the Akimovs and Liebers made exactly the same sort of speeches about "monstrous" centralism as poured from the lips of Martov and Co. at the League Congress. That opportunism leads to the Martov and Axelrod "views" on organization because of its very nature, and not by chance, and not only in Russia, but the world over, we shall see later when examining Comrade Axelrod's article in the new *Iskra*.

P. LITTLE ANNOYANCES SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO MAR A BIG PLEASURE

The rejection by the League of the resolution declaring that its rules must be endorsed by the Central Committee (*League Minutes*, p 105) was, as the majority of the Party Congress at once unanimously noted, a "*crying violation of the Party Rules*." Regarded as the act of men of principle, this violation was sheer anarchism, but in the atmosphere of the post-Congress struggle, it inevitably created the impression that the Party minority was trying to "settle accounts" with the Party majority (*League Minutes*, p 112); it was indicative that they did not wish to obey the Party or to remain within the Party. The League had refused to adopt a resolution on the statement of the Central Committee which regarded a change in its rules essential (pp 124-25), and it inevitably followed that this assembly, which wanted to *be counted* as an assembly of a Party organization but at the same time not to obey the central institution of the Party, had to

be regarded as *unlawful*. Accordingly, the followers of the Party majority at once withdrew from this quasi-Party assembly, so as not to have any share in an indecent farce

The individualism of the intellectual, with its platonic acceptance of organizational relations, which was revealed in the vacillations over §1 of the Rules, thus in practice reached the logical end I had predicted even in September, that is, a month and a half before, namely, the point of *demolishing* the Party organization. And at that moment, on the evening of the day the League Congress ended, Comrade Plekhanov announced to his colleagues on both the central institutions of the Party that he could not bear "to fire on his comrades," that "rather than have a split, it is better to put a bullet in one's brain," and that, to avert a greater evil, it was necessary to make the maximum personal concessions over which, properly speaking (and much more so than over the principles to be discerned in the incorrect position in relation to §1), this destructive struggle was being waged. In order to give a more precise account of Comrade Plekhanov's right-about-face, which has acquired a certain general Party significance, I consider it advisable to rely not on private conversations, nor on private letters (that last resort in extremity), but on the account of the case given by Plekhanov himself to the whole Party, namely, his article

"What Should Not Be Done?" in the *Iskra*, No 52, which was written just after the League Congress, after I had resigned from the editorial board of the Central Organ (November 1, 1903), and before the co-opting of the Martovists (November 26, 1903)

The fundamental idea of the article "What Should Not Be Done?" is that in politics one must not be straightforward, excessively harsh and excessively unyielding, that it is sometimes necessary, to avoid a split, to yield even to revisionists (among those close to us or among the inconsistent) and to anarchist individualists. It was only natural that these abstract general principles should arouse universal perplexity among *Iskra* readers. One cannot help laughing when reading the proud and majestic statements of Comrade Plekhanov (in subsequent articles) that he had not been understood because of the novelty of his ideas and because people lacked a knowledge of dialectics. It is true, when the article "What Should Not Be Done?" was written it could be understood only by about a dozen people living in two suburbs of Geneva the names of which both begin with the same letter. Comrade Plekhanov's misfortune was that he circulated among some ten thousand readers an agglomeration of hints, reproaches, algebraical symbols and riddles which were intended only for these dozen or so people who had taken part

in the developments of the post-Congress struggle against the minority. This misfortune befell Comrade Plekhanov because he violated the basic principle of that dialectics to which he so unluckily refers, the principle, namely, that there is no abstract truth, that truth is always concrete. That is why it was inappropriate to lend an abstract form to the very concrete idea of yielding to the Martovists after the League Congress.

Yielding—which Comrade Plekhanov advocated as a new war cry—is legitimate and essential in two cases: either when the yielder is convinced that those who are striving to make him yield are in the right (honest men of politics in such cases frankly and openly admit their mistake), or when an irrational and harmful demand is yielded to in order to avert a greater evil. It is perfectly clear from the article in question that it is the latter case the author has in mind: he speaks plainly of yielding to revisionists and anarchist individualists (that is, to the Martovists, as every Party member now knows from the minutes of the League), and says that it is essential in order to avert a split. As we see, Comrade Plekhanov's supposedly novel idea reduces itself to no more than the not very novel piece of commonplace wisdom, that little annoyances should not be allowed to mar a big pleasure, that a little opportunist folly and a little anarchist talk is better than a big Party

split When Comrade Plekhanov wrote this article he clearly realized that the minority represents the opportunist wing of our Party and that it was fighting with anarchist weapons Comrade Plekhanov came forward with the plan to combat this minority by means of personal concessions, just as (again *si licet parva componere magnis*) the German Social-Democrats combated Bernstein Bebel publicly declared at the congresses of his Party that he did not know anyone who was so susceptible to the influence of environment as Comrade Bernstein (not Mr Bernstein, as Comrade Plekhanov was once so fond of calling him, but Comrade Bernstein), let us take him into our environment, let us make him a member of the Reichstag, let us combat revisionism, not by excessive harshness (à la Sobakevich³⁰ Parvus) to the revisionist, but by "killing him with kindness"—as it was put, I recall, by Comrade Al Beer at a meeting of English Social-Democrats when defending German conciliatoriness, peaceableness, kindness, flexibility and discretion against the attack of the English Sobakevich-Hyndman. And in just the same way, Comrade Plekhanov wanted "to kill with kindness" the little anarchism and the little opportunism of Comrades Axelrod and Martov True, alongside with very plain hints at "anarchist individualists," Comrade Plekhanov expressed himself in a deliberately vague way about the revisionists, he

did so in a manner to create the impression that he was referring to the *Rabocheye-Dyelo*-ists, who were swinging from opportunism to orthodoxy, and not to Axelrod and Martov, who were beginning to swing *from orthodoxy to revisionism*. But this was only an innocent military ruse, a feeble bulwark that was incapable of withstanding the artillery fire of Party publicity.

And so anybody who acquaints himself with the actual state of affairs at the political juncture we are describing, anybody who studies Comrade Plekhanov's mentality, will realize that I could not at the time have acted otherwise than I did. I say this for the benefit of those support-

* After the Party Congress there was never any question of making concessions to Comrades Martynov, Akimov and Brouckère. I am not aware that they too demanded "co-option." I even doubt whether Comrade Starover or Comrade Martov consulted Comrade Brouckère when they addressed us their epistles and "notes" in the name of "half the Party". At the Congress of the League, Comrade Martov, with the profound indignation of an unbending political stalwart, rejected the very idea of a "union with Ryazanov or Martynov," of the possibility of a "deal" with them, or even of joint "service to the Party" (as an editor, *League Minutes*, p. 53). Comrade Martov sternly condemned the "Martynov tendencies" at the League Congress (p. 88), and when Comrade Orthodox³¹ subtly hinted that Axelrod and Martov no doubt "admitted that Comrades Akimov, Martynov and others, too, had the right to get together and also draw up rules for themselves and act in accordance with them as they saw fit" (p. 99), the Martovists denied it, as Peter denied Christ (p. 100, "Comrade Orthodox's fears" "regarding the Akimovs, Martynovs, etc.," "have no foundation").

ers of the majority who have reproached me for having surrendered the editorial board. When Comrade Plekhanov swung round after the Congress of the League and, from a supporter of the majority, became a supporter of reconciliation at all costs, I was obliged to put the very best interpretation on this turnabout. May it not have been that Comrade Plekhanov wanted in his article to set forth a program for an amicable and honest peace? All such programs boil down to a sincere admission of mistakes by both sides. What was the mistake of the majority that Comrade Plekhanov pointed out? An excessive harshness to the revisionists, a harshness worthy of Sobakevich. We do not know what Comrade Plekhanov had in mind by that—his own witicism about the asses, or his extremely incautious reference to anarchism and opportunism in Axelrod's presence. Comrade Plekhanov preferred to express himself "abstractly," and, moreover, with a hint at the other fellow. That is a matter of taste, of course. But, after all, I had admitted my own personal harshness openly both in the letter to the *Iskra*-ist and at the League Congress. How then could I refuse to admit that the majority were guilty of such a "mistake"? As to the minority, Comrade Plekhanov pointed out their mistake quite clearly, namely, revisionism (cf his remark about opportunism at the Party Congress and about Jaurèsism at the

League Congress) and anarchism which had led to a split. Could I resist an attempt to secure an acknowledgment of these mistakes and to undo their harm by means of personal concessions and "kindness" in general? Could I resist such an attempt, when Comrade Plekhanov, in his article "What Should Not Be Done?" directly appealed to us to "*spare the adversaries*" among the revisionists, who were revisionists "only because of a certain inconsistency?" And if I did not believe in this attempt, could I do otherwise than make a personal concession regarding the Central Organ and move over to the Central Committee, to defend the position of the majority there? * I

* Comrade Martov put it very aptly when he said that I moved over *avec armes et bagages*. Comrade Martov is very fond of military metaphors: campaign against the League, engagement, incurable wounds, etc., etc. To tell the truth, I too have a great weakness for military metaphors, especially just now, when one follows the news from the Pacific with such eager interest. But, Comrade Martov, if we are to use military language, this is how matters stood. We capture two forts at the Party Congress. You attack them at the League Congress. After a brief interchange of shots, my colleague, the commandant of one of the forts, opens the gates to the enemy. Naturally, I gather together the little artillery I have and move into the other fort, which is practically unfortified, in order to "stand siege" against the enemy's overwhelming numbers. I even make offers of peace, for what chance do I stand against two powers? But in reply to my offers, the new allies bombard my last fort. I return the fire. Whereupon my former colleague—the commandant—exclaims in magnificent disgust: "Just look, good people, how bellicose this Chamberlain is!"

could not absolutely deny the feasibility of such attempts and take upon myself the full onus for the threatened split, if only because I myself had been inclined, in the letter of October 6, to attribute the scrap to "personal irritation." But I did consider and still consider it my political duty to defend the position of the majority. To rely on Comrade Plekhanov in this would have been difficult and risky, for everything went to show that he was prepared dialectically to interpret his phrase—"a leader of the proletariat has no right to give rein to his truculent inclinations when they run counter to political good sense"—to mean that if you must fire, then it is better sense (in view of the state of the weather in Geneva in November) to fire at the majority. .. It was essential to defend the position of the majority because, when dealing with the question of the free (?) will of a revolutionary, Comrade Plekhanov—in defiance of dialectics, which demands a concrete and comprehensive examination—modestly evaded the question of *confidence in a revolutionary*, of confidence in a "leader of the proletariat" who was leading a definite wing of the Party. When speaking of anarchist individualism and advising us to close our eyes "at times" to violations of discipline and "sometimes" to yield to intellectual license, which "is rooted in a sentiment that has nothing to do with fidelity to the revolutionary idea," Comrade

Plekhanov apparently forgot that we must also reckon with the good will of the majority of the Party, and that it must be left *precisely to the practical workers* to determine the *extent* of the concessions to be made to the anarchist individualists. Just as it is easy to wage a literary struggle against childish anarchist nonsense, it is difficult to carry on practical work with an anarchist individualist in one and the same organization. A writer who took it upon himself to determine the extent of the concessions that might be made to anarchism in practice would only be betraying his inordinate and truly doctrinaire literary conceit. Comrade Plekhanov majestically remarked (for the importance of the thing, as Bazarov²² used to say), that if a new split were to occur the workers would cease to comprehend us, yet at the same time he set the ball rolling for an endless series of articles in the new *Iskra* whose real and concrete meaning was bound to be incomprehensible not only to the workers, but to the world at large. No wonder that when a member of the Central Committee was reading the proofs of "What Should Not Be Done?" he warned Comrade Plekhanov that his plan to somewhat curtail the size of a certain publication (the minutes of the Party Congress and the League Congress) would be defeated by this very article, which would fire curiosity, submit to the judgment of the man in the street.

something that was piquant and at the same time quite incomprehensible to him,' and inevitably cause people to ask in perplexity "What has happened?" It is not surprising that owing to the abstractness of its arguments and the vagueness of its hints, this article of Comrade Plekhanov's caused jubilation in the ranks of the enemies of Social-Democracy—the dancing of a *can-can* in the columns of the *Revolutsionnaya Rossiya*³⁴ and ecstatic praises from consistent revisionists in the *Osvobozhdeniye*. The source of all these amusing and sad misunderstandings, from which Comrade Plekhanov later tried so amusingly and so sadly to extricate himself, lay precisely in the violation of a basic principle of dialectics: concrete questions should be examined in all their concreteness. The delight of Mr Struve, in particular, was quite natural: he was not in the least interested in the "good" aims

* We are having a heated and passionate argument in a certain apartment. Suddenly, one of us jumps up, flings open the window and begins to shout imprecations at Sobakeviches, anarchist individualists, revisionists, etc. Naturally, a crowd of inquisitive idlers gathers in the street and our enemies rub their hands in glee. Other disputants go to the window too and express the desire to give a coherent account of the matter from the very beginning and without hinting at things nobody knows anything about. Thereupon the window is banged to on the plea that it is not worth while discussing *squabbles* (*Iskra*, No 53, p 8, col 2, line 24 from bottom). Yes, Comrade Plekhanov,³³ it was not worth while *beginning* to discuss "squabbles" in the *Iskra*—that would be the truth!

(killing with kindness) which Comrade Plekhanov pursued (but might not achieve), Mr Struve welcomed, and could not but welcome, that *turn towards the opportunist wing of our Party* which had begun in the new *Iskra*, as everybody can now plainly see. It is not only the Russian bourgeois democrats who welcome every turn towards opportunism, even the slightest and most temporary, in all Social-Democratic parties. The estimate of a shrewd enemy is very rarely based upon sheer misunderstanding: you can tell a man's mistakes by the people who praise him. And it is in vain for Comrade Plekhanov to base his hopes on the inattentive reader and think to represent matters as though the majority were unquestionably objecting to a personal concession in the matter of co-optation, and not to a desertion from the Left wing of the Party to the Right. The point is not at all that Comrade Plekhanov made a personal concession in order to avert a split (that was very praiseworthy), but that while fully realizing the need for *contending* with the inconsistent revisionists and anarchist individualists, he preferred to contend with the majority, with whom he parted ways *over the extent* of possible practical concessions to anarchism. The point is not that Comrade Plekhanov changed the personal composition of the editorial board, but that he betrayed his position in the dispute with revisionism and anarchism and

ceased to defend that position in the Central Organ of the Party

As to the Central Committee, which *at that time* acted as the sole organized representative of the majority, Comrade Plekhanov had parted ways with it then *exclusively over the possible extent of the practical concessions to anarchism*. Nearly a month had elapsed since November 1, when my resignation had given a free hand to the policy of killing with kindness. Comrade Plekhanov had had every opportunity, through all sorts of contacts, to test the suitability of this policy. Comrade Plekhanov had at this time come out with the article "What Should Not Be Done?" which was—and *remains*—the Martovists' sole ticket of admittance, so to speak, to the editorial board. The watchwords—revisionism (which we should contend with, but sparing the adversary) and anarchist individualism (which should be courted and killed with kindness)—were printed on this ticket in imposing italics. Do come in, gentlemen, please, I will kill you with kindness—is what Comrade Plekhanov said by this invitation card to his new colleagues on the editorial board. Naturally, all that remained to the Central Committee was to say its last word (and that is exactly what ultimatum means—a last word for a possible peace) about what, in its opinion, was the permissible extent of the practical concessions to anarchist individ-

Let's say. Either you want peace—in which case here are a certain number of seats to prove our friendliness, peaceableness, readiness to make concessions etc. (we cannot allow you any more if peace is to be guaranteed in the Party, peace not in the sense of an absence of quarrels, but in the sense that the Party will not be destroyed by anarchist individualism): take these seats and quietly swing back again from Akimov to Plekhanov. Or else you want to maintain and develop your point of view, to swing over altogether to Akimov (if only in the realm of organizational questions), and to convince the Party that you are right, and not Plekhanov—in which case go on with a literary group of your own, secure representation at the next Congress and set about winning a majority by an honest struggle, by open controversy. This alternative, which was quite explicitly submitted to the Martovists in the ultimatum of the Central Committee of November 25, 1903 (see *A State of Siege and Commercialities on the League Minutes**), was in full har-

* I shall not, of course, go into the tangle created by Martov in *A State of Siege* over this ultimatum of the Central Committee by quoting private conversations, and so on. This is the "second method of struggle" I described in the previous chapter, which only a specialist in nervous disorders can hope to disentangle with any success. It is enough to say that Comrade Martov insists that there was an agreement with the Central Committee not to publish the negotiations, which agreement has not been

mony with the letter which Plekhanov and I had sent to the former editors on October 6, 1903 either it is a matter of personal irritation (in which case, *if the worst comes to the worst*, we might even "co-opt"), or it is a matter of a difference of principle (in which case you must first convince the Party, and only then talk about changing the personal composition of the central bodies) The Central Committee could the more readily leave the Martovists to decide this delicate dilemma for themselves since *at that very*

discovered to this day in spite of a thorough search Comrade Travinsky, who conducted the negotiations on behalf of the Central Committee, has informed me in writing "that he considers me entitled to publish my letter to the editorial board outside of the *Iskra*"

There was one phrase of Comrade Martov's that pleased me especially That was the phrase, "Bonapartism of the worst type" I find that Comrade Martov has noted this category very appropriately Let us examine dispassionately what the concept implies In my opinion, it implies an acquisition of power by means which are *formally speaking* legal, but which *actually speaking* are in defiance of the will of the people (or of a party) Is that not so, Comrade Martov? And if it is, then I may calmly leave it to the public to judge who was guilty of this "Bonapartism of the worst type," Lenin and Comrade Y,⁸⁵ who might have availed themselves of their *formal* right not to admit the Martovists, relying, moreover, on the will of the Second Congress, but who *did not avail themselves* of that right—or those who were *formally speaking right* in occupying the editorial board ("unanimous co-option"), but who knew that *actually speaking this was not in accordance with the will of the Second Congress* and were afraid to test this will at the Third Congress?

1
time Comrade Martov wrote his profession de foi ("Once More in the Minority") which contained the following lines

"The minority lay claim to only one honour, namely, to be the first in the history of our Party to show that one can be 'defeated' without forming a new Party. This position of the minority follows from all their views on the organizational development of the Party, it follows from the consciousness of their strong ties with the Party's earlier work. The minority have no faith in the mystical powers of 'paper revolutions' and consider that the profound and vital justness of their endeavours is a guarantee that by purely ideological propaganda within the Party they will secure the triumph of their principles of organization" (My italics)

What proud and magnificent words! And how bitter it was to be taught by experience that they were—*only words*. I hope you will forgive me, Comrade Martov, but now *I claim on behalf of the majority* this "honour" which *you have not deserved*. The honour will indeed be a great one, one worth fighting for, for the circles have left us the tradition of an extraordinarily light-hearted attitude towards splits and an extraordinarily zealous application of the maxim. "either coats off, or let us have your hand!"

The big pleasure (of having a united Party) was bound to outweigh, and did outweigh, the little annoyances (in the shape of the squabbling over co-option). I resigned from the Central Organ, and Comrade Y (who had been delegated by Plekhanov and myself to the Party Council on behalf of the editorial board of the Central Organ) resigned from the Council. The Martovists replied to the Central Committee's last offer of peace by a letter (see publications mentioned) which was tantamount to a declaration of war. Then, and only then, did I write my letter to the editorial board (*Iskra*, No 53) on the subject of publicity. If it comes to talking about revisionism, and discussing inconsistency, anarchist individualism, and the defeat of various leaders, then, gentlemen let us tell all that occurred without reservation—such was the contents of this letter on the subject of publicity. The editorial board replied with angry abuse and the magisterial admonition: do not dare to stir up the "*pettiness and squabbling of circle life*" (*Iskra*, No 53). Is that so, thought I to myself: "the pettiness and squabbling of circle life"? Well, es ist mir recht, gentlemen, there I agree with you. Why, that means that you directly class all this fuss over "co-option" as *circle squabbling*. That is true. But what discord is this?—in the editorial of this same issue, No 53, this same editorial board (we must suppose) takes up the talk about bureaucra-

cy, formalism and the rest ! Do not dare to raise the question about the struggle over co-option to the Central Organ, for that would be squabbling. But we will raise the question about co-option to the Central Committee and will call it not squabbling, but a difference of principle on the subject of "formalism" No, dear comrades, said I to myself, permit me not to permit you that You want to fire at my fort and yet demand that I surrender my artillery What jokers you are! And so I wrote and published outside of the *Iskra* my *Letter to the Editorial Board (Why I Resigned from the "Iskra")*, briefly relating what really occurred, and asking again and again whether peace was not possible on the basis of the following division you take the Central Organ, and we take the Central Committee, neither of the sides will then feel itself an "alien" in its own Party, and we will argue about the swing towards opportunism, first in the literary publications, and then, perhaps, at the third Party Congress

In reply to this mention of peace the enemy opened fire with all his batteries, including even the Council Shells fell like hail. Autocrat,

* As it subsequently turned out, the "discord" is explained very simply—it was a discord among the editors of the Central Organ It was Plekhanov who wrote about "squabbling" (see his admission in "A Sad Misunderstanding," No 57), while the editorial, "Our Congress," was written by Martov (*A State of Siege*, p 84) They were tugging in different directions

Schweitzer, bureaucrat, formalist, supercentre, strait-laced, stiff-necked, obstinate, narrow-minded, suspicious, quarrelsome Very well, my friends! Have you finished? You have nothing more in reserve? Poor ammunition, I must say .

Now comes my turn Let us examine the *content* of the new views on organization of the new *Iskria* and the relation of these views to that division of our Party into a "majority" and a "minority" the true character of which we have shown by our analysis of the debates and the votes at the Second Congress

Q THE NEW *ISKRA* OPPORTUNISM IN QUESTIONS OF ORGANIZATION

As the basis for an analysis of the principles of the new *Iskra* we should unquestionably take the two articles of Comrade Axelrod.* The concrete meaning of some of his favourite catchwords has already been shown at length. Now we must try to abstract ourselves from their concrete meaning and get at the roots of the line of thought that forced the "minority" (on any small or minor occasion) to arrive at these particular slogans rather than at any other, examine the principles behind these slogans, irrespective of their origin, irrespective of the question of "co-option." Concessions are all the fashion nowadays, so let us make a concession to Comrade Axelrod and take his "theory" "seriously."

Comrade Axelrod's basic thesis (*Iskra*, No 57) is that "from the very outset our movement was

* These articles were included in the collection *The "Iskra" for Two Years*, part II, p. 122 et seq. (St. Petersburg, 1906) (Author's note to 1907 edition—*Ed*)

fraught with two opposite trends, the mutual antagonism of which could not fail to develop and to affect the movement parallel with its own development " To be precise: "in principle, the proletarian aim of the movement (in Russia) is the same as that of the western Social-Democracy." But in our country the influence is exercised on the workers "by a social element alien to them," namely, the radical intelligentsia And so, Comrade Axelrod establishes an antagonism between the proletarian and the radical-intellectual trends in our Party.

In this Comrade Axelrod is undoubtedly right The existence of such an antagonism (and not in the Russian Social-Democratic Party alone) is beyond question What is more, everyone knows that it is this antagonism that very largely accounts for the division of present-day Social-Democracy into revolutionary (also known as the orthodox) and the opportunist (revisionist, ministerialist, reformist) Social-Democracy, which has become fully apparent in Russia, too, during the past ten years of our movement Everyone also knows that the proletarian trend of the movement is expressed by orthodox Social-Democracy, while the trend of the democratic intelligentsia is expressed by opportunist Social-Democracy

But, having come face to face with this piece of common knowledge, Comrade Axelrod then

begins to shy and back away from it. He does not make *the slightest attempt* to analyze how this division has manifested itself in the history of Russian Social-Democracy in general, and at our Party Congress in particular, although it is about the Congress that Comrade Axelrod is writing! Like all the other editors of the new *Iskra*, Comrade Axelrod displays a *mortal fear* of the minutes of this Congress. This should not surprise us after what has been said, but in a "theoretician" who claims to be investigating the different trends in our movement it is certainly a queer case of *truth-shyness*. Backing away, because of this malady, from the latest and most accurate material on the trends in our movement, Comrade Axelrod seeks salvation in the sphere of pleasant daydreaming. He writes "Has not legal or semi-Marxism provided our liberals with a literary leader? Why should not prankish history provide revolutionary bourgeois democracy with a leader from the school of orthodox, revolutionary Marxism?" All we can say about this daydream which Comrade Axelrod finds so pleasant is that if history does sometimes play prankish tricks, that is no excuse for *prankish thoughts* in people who undertake to analyze history. When the liberal peeped out from under the cloak of the leader of semi-Marxism, those who wished (and were able) to trace his "trends" did not allude to possible prankish tricks of history, but

to tens and hundreds of instances of the mentality and logic of that leader and to those peculiarities of his literary make-up which were stamped with the reflection of Marxism in bourgeois literature³⁸ And if, after having undertaken to analyze "the general revolutionary and the proletarian trends in our movement," Comrade Axelrod could produce *nothing, absolutely nothing*, in proof or evidence that certain representatives of that orthodox wing of the Party which he detests so much have such-and-such tendencies, he thereby issued a *formal certificate of his own poverty* Comrade Axelrod's case must be very weak indeed if all he can do is to allude to possible pranks of history!

Comrade Axelrod's other allusion—to the "Jacobins"—is still more revealing Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the division of present-day Social-Democracy into revolutionary and opportunist has long since given rise—and not only in Russia—to "historical parallels with the era of the Great French Revolution" Comrade Axelrod is probably aware that the *Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy* are always and everywhere resorting to the terms "Jacobinism," "Blanquism" and so on to describe their opponents Let us then not imitate Comrade Axelrod in his truth-shyness, let us consult the minutes of our Congress and see whether they offer any material for an analysis and examination of the

trends we are discussing and the parallels we are dissecting

First example the debate on the program at the Party Congress Comrade Akimov ("fully agreeing" with Comrade Martynov) says "the clause on the capture of political power (the dictatorship of the proletariat) has been formulated in such a way—as compared with the programs of all other Social-Democratic parties—that it may be interpreted, and has actually been interpreted by Plekhanov, to mean that the role of the leading organization will relegate to the background the class it is leading and separate the former from the latter Consequently, the formulation of our political tasks is exactly the same as that of the *Narodnaya Volya* " (*Minutes*, p 124) Comrade Plekhanov and other *Iskra*-ists reply to Comrade Akimov and accuse him of opportunism Does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute shows (in actual fact, and not in the imaginary pranks of history) the antagonism between the *modern Jacobins* and the modern *Girondists* of Social-Democracy? And was it not because he found himself in the company of the Girondists of Social-Democracy (owing to the mistakes he committed) that Comrade Axelrod began talking about Jacobins?

Second example Comrade Posadovsky asserts that there is a "grave difference of opinion" over the "fundamental question" of the "absolute

value of democratic principles" (p 169) Together with Plekhanov, he denies their absolute value. The leaders of the "Centre," or the Marsh (Egorov), and of the anti-*Iskra*-ists (Goldblatt) resolutely oppose this view and accuse Plekhanov of "imitating bourgeois tactics" (p 170) *This is exactly Comrade Axelrod's idea of a connection between orthodoxy and the bourgeois trends*, the only difference being that in Axelrod's case it is vague and general, whereas Goldblatt linked it up with definite issues of the debate. Again we ask does not Comrade Axelrod find that this dispute, too, *obviously* shows, at our Party Congress, the antagonism between the Jacobins and the Girondists in present-day Social-Democracy? Is it not because he finds himself in the company of the Girondists that Comrade Axelrod raises this outcry against the Jacobins?

Third example the debate on §1 of the Rules. Who is it that defends "*the proletarian trend in our movement*"? Who is it that insists that the worker is not afraid of organization, that the proletarian has no sympathy for anarchy, and that he values the prompting to organize? Who is it that warns us against the bourgeois intelligentsia which is permeated through and through with opportunism? *The Jacobins of Social-Democracy*. And who is it that tries to smuggle radical intellectuals into the Party? Who is it that is concerned about professors, high-school

students, freelances, the radical youth? *The Girondist Axelrod together with the Girondist Lieber.*

How clumsily Comrade Axelrod defends himself against the "false accusation of opportunism" that was openly levelled at the majority of the Emancipation of Labour group at our Party Congress! He defends himself in a manner that confirms the charge, for he keeps reiterating the hackneyed Bernsteinian song about Jacobinism, Blanquism and so on! He shouts about the menace of the radical intellectuals in order to drown his own speeches at the Party Congress which were full of concern for these intellectuals

These "dreadful words"—Jacobinism and the rest—are expressive of *opportunism* and nothing but that. A Jacobin who maintains an inseparable bond with the *organization* of the proletariat, a proletariat *conscious* of its class interests, is a *revolutionary Social-Democrat*. A Girondist who yearns for professors and high-school students, who is afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat and who sighs about the absolute value of democratic demands is an *opportunist*. It is only opportunists who can still detect a danger in conspiratorial organizations today, when the idea of narrowing down the political struggle to a conspiracy has been rejected thousands of times in written publications and has long been rejected

and swept aside by the realities of life, and when the cardinal importance of mass political agitation has been elucidated and reiterated to the point of nausea. The real basis of this fear of conspiracy, of Blanquism, is not any definite feature to be found in the practical movement (as Bernstein and Co. have long, and vainly, been trying to show), but the Girondist timidity of the bourgeois intellectual whose mentality is so often revealed among the Social-Democrats of today. Nothing could be more comical than these laborious efforts of the new *Iskra* to utter a *new word* of warning (which has been uttered hundreds of times before) against the tactics of the French conspirator revolutionaries of the 'forties and 'sixties (No 62, editorial).³⁷ In the next issue of the *Iskra*, the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy will probably name a group of French conspirators of the 'forties for whom the importance of political agitation among the working masses, the importance of the labour press as the principal means by which the party influences the class, was a rudimentary truth they had learned and assimilated long ago.

However, the tendency of the new *Iskra* to repeat the ABC and go back to rudiments while pretending to be uttering something new is not fortuitous; it is an inevitable consequence of the situation. Axelrod and Martov find themselves in,

now that they have landed in the opportunist wing of our Party. There is nothing for it. They have to go on repeating opportunist phrases, they have to go *back* in order to try to find in the *remote past* at least some sort of justification for their position, which is indefensible from the point of view of the struggle at the Congress and of the shades and divisions in the Party that took shape there. To the profound Akimovist remarks about Jacobinism and Blanquism. Comrade Axelrod adds Akimovist lamentations to the effect that the "politicians" as well, and not only the "Economists," were "one-sided," excessively "infatuated," and so on and so forth. Reading the high-flown disquisitions on this subject in the new *Iskra*, which conceitedly claims to be above one-sidedness and infatuation, one asks in perplexity: whose portrait are they painting? where do they hear this talk? Who does not know that the division of the Russian Social-Democrats into Economists and politicians has long been obsolete? Go through the files of the *Iskra* for the last year or two before the Party Congress and you will find that the fight against "Economism" subsided and came to an end altogether as far back as 1902. you will find, for example, that in July 1903 (No. 43), the "times of Economism" are spoken of as being "definitely over." Economism is considered to be "dead and buried," and the infatuation of the politicians is regarded as

clear atavism. Why, then, do the new editors of the *Iskra* revert to this dead and buried division? Can it be that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress because of the mistakes they made in the *Rabocheye Dyelo* two years ago? If we had, we would have been sheer idiots. But everyone knows that we did not, that it was not for their old, dead and buried mistakes in the *Rabocheye Dyelo* that we fought the Akimovs at the Congress, but for the *new mistakes* they committed in their arguments and in their voting at the Congress. It was not by their stand on the *Rabocheye Dyelo*, but by their stand at the Congress, that we judged which mistakes had really been abandoned and which still lived and called for controversy. By the time of the Congress the old division into Economists and politicians no longer existed, but various opportunist trends continued to exist. They found expression in the debates and voting on a number of issues, and finally led to a new division of the Party into a "majority" and a "minority." The whole point is that the new editors of the *Iskra* are for obvious reasons trying to gloss over the connection that exists between this new division and *contemporary* opportunism in our Party, and are, consequently, compelled to go back from the new division to the old one. Their inability to explain the political origin of the new division (or their desire, in order to prove how accommodating they

are, to cast a veil * over its origin) compels them to keep harping on a division that has long been obsolete. Everyone knows that the basis of the new division is a difference of opinion over questions of *organization*, which began with the controversy over principles of organization (§1 of the Rules) and ended up with a "practice" worthy of anarchists. The old division into Economists and politicians was based mainly on a difference of opinion over questions of *tactics*.

In its efforts to justify this retreat from the more complex, truly topical and burning issues of Party life to issues that have long been settled and have now been dug up artificially, the new *Iskra* resorts to an amusing display of profundity for which there can be no other name than *khuostism*. Started by Comrade Axelrod, there runs like a crimson thread through all the

* See Plekhanov's article on "Economism" in the *Iskra*, No 53. The subtitle of the article appears to contain a slight misprint. Instead of "Reflections on the Second Party Congress," it should apparently read, "On the League Congress," or even "On Co-option." However appropriate concessions to personal claims may be under certain circumstances, it is quite inadmissible (from the Party, not the philistine standpoint) to confuse the issues that are agitating the Party and to substitute for the new mistake of Martov and Axelrod, who have begun to turn from orthodoxy to opportunism, the old mistake (never recalled today by anyone except the new *Iskra*) of the Martynovs and the Akimovs, who may now be prepared, for all one knows, to turn from opportunism to orthodoxy on many questions of program and tactics.

writing of the new *Iskra* the profound "thought" that content is more important than form, that program and tactics are more important than organization, that "the virility of an organization is in direct proportion to the volume and importance of the content it puts into the movement," that centralism is not "something self-contained" not an "all-saving talisman," etc , etc Great and profound truths! A program is indeed more important than tactics, and tactics are more important than organization. The alphabet is more important than etymology, and etymology more important than syntax—but what would we say of people who, having failed in an examination in syntax, went about pluming and priding themselves on having been kept over in a lower class for another year? Comrade Axelrod argued about principles of organization like an opportunist (§1), and behaved inside the organization like an anarchist (League Congress),—and now he is trying to render Social-Democracy more profound Sour grapes! What is organization, properly speaking? Why, it is only a form What is centralism? After all, it is not a talisman What is syntax? Why, it is less important than etymology, it is only a form of combining the elements of etymology "Will not Comrade Alexandrov agree with us," the new editors of the *Iskra* triumphantly ask, "when we say that the Congress did much more for the centralization of

Party work by drawing up a Party program than by adopting rules, however perfect the latter may seem?" (No 56, Supplement) It is to be hoped that this classical utterance will acquire a historic fame no less wide and no less lasting than Comrade Krichevsky's celebrated remark to the effect that Social-Democracy, like mankind, always sets itself achievable tasks. This piece of profundity of the new *Iskra* is of exactly the same policy. Why was Comrade Krichevsky's phrase held up to derision? Because he tried to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of tactics—their inability correctly to set political aims—by a commonplace which he wanted to palm off as philosophy. In exactly the same way the new *Iskra* tries to justify the mistake of a section of the Social-Democrats in matters of organization, to justify the instability of the intellectual displayed by certain comrades—which has led them to the point of anarchist phrasemongering—by the commonplace that a program is more important than rules, and that questions of program are more important than questions of organization! What is this but *khuostism*? What is this but pluming oneself on having been left over in a lower class for another year?

The adoption of a program contributes more to the centralization of the work than the adoption of rules. How this commonplace, palmed off as phi-

program and tactics. At present, as we all agree, this fight had already ensured a sufficient degree of unity, as formulated in the Party program and in the Party's resolution on tactics, we had to take the next step, and, by common consent, we did take it, working out the *forms* of a united organization that would merge all the circles together. We have been dragged back and half of these forms have been destroyed, we have been dragged back to anarchist conduct, to anarchist phrasemongering, to the revival of a circle in place of a Party editorial board. And this step back is being justified on the plea that the alphabet is more helpful to literate speech than a knowledge of syntax!

The philosophy of *khvostism* which flourished three years ago in questions of tactics is being resurrected today in application to questions of organization. Take the following argument of the new editors. "The militant Social-Democratic trend in the Party," says Comrade Alexandrov, "should be maintained not only by an ideological struggle, but by definite forms of organization." Whereupon the editors edifyingly remark: "Not bad, this juxtaposition of ideological struggle and forms of organization. The ideological struggle is a process whereas the forms of organization are only . . . forms" (believe it or not, that is what they say in No 56, Supplement, p. 4, col 1, bottom of page!) "designated to clothe a fluid and

developing content—the developing practical work of the Party.” That is quite in the style of the joke about a cannon ball being a cannon ball and a bomb a bomb! The ideological struggle is a process, and the forms of organization are only forms clothing the content! The point at issue is whether our ideological struggle is to have forms of a *higher type* to clothe it, forms of Party organization binding on all, or the forms of the old disunity and the old circles. We have been dragged back from higher to more primitive forms, and this is being justified on the plea that the ideological struggle is a process, whereas forms—are just forms. That is just how Comrade Krichevsky in bygone days tried to drag us back from the tactics-as-a-plan to tactics-as-a-process.

Take the pompous talk of the new *Iskra* about the “self-training of the proletariat” which is directed against those who are supposed to be in danger of missing the content because of the form (No 58, editorial). Is this not Akimovism No. 2? Akimovism No. 1 used to justify the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in formulating tactical tasks by referring to the more “profound” content of the “proletarian struggle” and the self-training of the proletariat. Akimovism No. 2 justifies the backwardness of a section of the Social-Democratic intelligentsia in the theory and practice of organization by equally profound references

... form, the main and important thing being the self-training of the proletariat. Let me tell you, gentlemen who are so solicitous about the younger brother, that the proletariat is not afraid of organization and discipline! The proletariat will do nothing to have the worthy professors and high-school students, who do not want to join an organization, recognized as Party members merely because they work under the control of an organization. The proletariat is trained by its whole life for organization far more radically than many an intellectual prig. Having gained some understanding of our program and our tactics, the proletariat will not start justifying backwardness in organization by arguing that the form is less important than the content. It is not the proletariat, but *certain intellectuals* in our Party who lack *self-training* in the spirit of organization and discipline, in the spirit of hostility and contempt for anarchist phrasemongering. When they say that it is not ripe for organization, the Akimovs No. 2 libel the proletariat just as the Akimovs No. 1 libelled it when they said that it was not ripe for the political struggle. The proletarian who has become a conscious Social-Democrat and feels that he is a member of the Party will reject *khvostism* in matters of organization with the same contempt as he rejected *khvostism* in matters of tactics.

Finally, consider the profound wisdom of "Practical Worker" in the new *Iskra*. "Properly understood," he says, "the idea of a 'militant' centralized organization uniting and centralizing the *activities*" (the italics are to make it look more profound) "of revolutionaries can naturally materialize only if such activities *exist*" (new and clever!), "The organization itself, being a form" (mark that!), "can only grow *simultaneously*" (the italics are the author's, as throughout this quotation) "with the growth of the revolutionary work which is its content" (No 57) Does this not remind you very much of the hero in the folk tale who, on seeing a funeral, cried "Many happy returns of the day"? I am sure there is not a practical worker (in the genuine sense of the term) in our Party who does not understand that it is precisely the form of our activities (i.e., our organization) that has been lagging behind its content for a very long time, and lagging desperately, and that only the Simple Simon in the Party could shout to those who are lagging "Keep in line; don't run ahead!" Compare our Party, let us say, with the Bund There can be no question but that the *content* *

* I will not mention the fact that the *content* of our Party work was outlined at the Congress (in the program, etc) in the spirit of revolutionary Social-Democracy only *at the cost of a struggle*, a struggle against the very anti-*Iskra*-ists and the very Marsh whose representatives numerically predominate in our "minority" On this ques-

of the work of our Party is immeasurably richer, more varied, broader and deeper than that of the Bund. The scope of our theoretical views is wider, our program more developed, the influence we exercise on the working-class masses (and not on the organized artisans alone) broader and deeper, our propaganda and agitation more varied, the pulse of the political work of the leaders and of the rank and file more lively, the popular movements during demonstrations and general strikes grander, and our work among the non-proletarian strata more energetic. And the "form"? Compared with that of the Bund, the "form" of our work is lagging unpardonably, lagging so that it is an eyesore and brings a blush of shame to the cheeks of anyone who does not merely "pick his nose" when contemplating the affairs of his Party. The fact that the organization of our work is lagging behind its content is our weak point, and it was our weak point long before the Congress, long before the Organization Committee was formed. The undeveloped and unstable character of the form makes any serious step in the further development of the content impossible, it causes a shameful stagnation, leads to a waste of energy, to a discrepancy

tion of "content" it would be interesting also to compare, for example, six issues of the old *Iskra* (Nos 46-51) with twelve issues of the new *Iskra* (Nos 52-63). But that will have to wait for some other time

between word and deed. We have all suffered enough from this discrepancy, yet along come the Axelrods and the "Practical Workers" of the new *Iskra* with their profound precept the form must grow naturally, and only simultaneously with the content!

That is where a small mistake on the question of organization (§1) will lead you, if you try to *lend profundity* to nonsense and to find philosophical justification for an opportunist phrase Pacing slowly in timid zigzags!—we have heard this refrain in application to questions of tactics; we are hearing it again in application to questions of organization *Khvostism in questions of organization* is a natural and inevitable product of the mentality of the *anarchist individualist* when he starts to elevate his anarchist deviations (which at the outset may have been accidental) to a *system of views*, to *special differences of principle* At the Congress of the League we witnessed the beginnings of this anarchism, in the new *Iskra* we are witnessing attempts to elevate it to a system of views. These attempts strikingly confirm what was already said at the Party Congress about the difference between the point of view of the bourgeois intellectual who attaches himself to the Social-Democratic movement and the proletarian who has become conscious of his class interests For instance, this same "Practical Worker" of the new *Iskra* with whose profundity

we are already familiar denounces me for visualizing the Party as "an immense factory" headed by a director in the shape of the Central Committee (No 57, Supplement) "Practical Worker" does not even guess that the dreadful word he uses immediately betrays the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual who is familiar neither with the practice nor with the theory of proletarian organization. For the factory, which seems only a bogey to some, represents that highest form of capitalist cooperation which has united and disciplined the proletariat, taught it to organize, and placed it at the head of all the other sections of the toiling and exploited population. And it is precisely Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat trained by capitalism, that has taught and is teaching unstable intellectuals to distinguish between the factory as a means of exploitation (discipline based on fear of starvation) and the factory as a means of organization (discipline based on collective work united by the conditions of a technically highly-developed form of production). The discipline and organization which come so hard to the bourgeois intellectual are especially easily acquired by the proletariat just because of this factory "schooling." Mortal fear of this school and utter failure to understand its importance as an organizing factor are characteristic of the ways of thinking which reflect the petty-bourgeois mode of life and which give rise to that

species of anarchism which the German Social-Democrats call Edelanarchismus, i.e., the anarchism of the "noble" gentleman, or aristocratic anarchism, as I would call it. This aristocratic anarchism is particularly characteristic of the Russian nihilist. He thinks of the Party organization as a monstrous "factory", he regards the subordination of the part to the whole and of the minority to the majority as "serfdom" (see Axelrod's articles), division of labour under the direction of a centre evokes from him a tragicomical outcry against people being transformed into "wheels and cogs" (to turn editors into contributors being considered a particularly atrocious species of such transformation); mention of the organizational rules of the Party calls forth a contemptuous grimace and the disdainful remark (intended for the "formalists") that one could very well dispense with rules altogether.

Incredible as it may seem, it was a didactic remark of just this sort that Comrade Martov addressed to me in the *Iskra*, No. 58, quoting, for greater weight, my own words in *A Letter to a Comrade*. Well, what is it if not "aristocratic anarchism," and *khuostism* to cite examples from the era of disunity, the era of the circle, to justify the preservation and glorification of the circle spirit and anarchy in the era of the Party?

Why did we not need rules before? Because the Party consisted of separate circles, unco-

nected by any organizational tie. Any individual could pass from one circle to another at his own "sweet will," for he was not faced with any formulated expression of the will of the whole. Disputes within the circles were not settled by rules, "but *by a struggle and by threats to resign*," as I put it in *A Letter to a Comrade*, citing the experience of a number of circles in general and of our own editorial circle of six in particular. In the era of the circles, this was natural and inevitable, but it never occurred to anybody to exploit it, to regard it as ideal; everyone complained of the disunity, everyone was tired of it and was eager to see the isolated circles fused into a formally constituted party organization. And now that this fusion has taken place, we are being dragged back and, under the guise of higher organizational views, treated to anarchist phrasemongering! To those who are accustomed to the loose dressing gown and slippers of the Oblomov circle domesticity, formal rules seem narrow, restrictive, irksome, petty and bureaucratic, a bond of serfdom and a fetter on the free "process" of the ideological struggle. Aristocratic anarchism cannot understand that formal rules are needed precisely in order to replace the narrow circle ties by the broad Party tie. It was unnecessary and impossible to give formal shape to the internal ties of a circle or the ties between circles, for these ties rested on friendship or on a "confidence" for

which no reason or motive had to be given. The Party tie cannot and must not rest on either of these, it must be founded on *formal*, "bureaucratically" worded rules (bureaucratic from the standpoint of the undisciplined intellectual), strict adherence to which can alone safeguard us from the wilfulness and caprices characteristic of the circles, from the circle methods of scrapping that goes by the name of the free "process" of the ideological struggle

The editors of the new *Iskra* try to trump Alexandrov with the didactic remark that "confidence is a delicate matter and cannot be knocked into people's hearts and minds" (No 56, Supplement) The editors do not realize that by this talk about confidence, *naked* confidence, they are once more betraying their aristocratic anarchism and organizational *khvostism* When I was a member of a circle only—whether it was the circle of the six editors or the *Iskra* organization—I was entitled to justify my refusal, say, to work with X merely on the grounds of lack of confidence, without stating reason or motive But now that I have become a member of a party, I am *no longer entitled* to plead lack of confidence in general for that would throw open the doors to all the freaks and whims of the old circles, I am *obliged* to give formal reasons for my "confidence" or "lack of confidence," that is, I must cite a formally established principle of our program, tac-

tics or rules; I must not just declare my "confidence" or "lack of confidence" without giving reasons for them, but must realize that *account must be given* for my decisions—and generally for all decisions of any section of the Party—to the whole Party; I am obliged to adhere to a *formally prescribed* procedure when giving expression to my "lack of confidence," or when trying to secure the acceptance of the views and wishes that follow from this lack of confidence. We have risen above the *circle* view that "confidence" does not have to be accounted for to the *Party* view which demands adherence to a formally prescribed procedure of expressing, accounting for and *testing* our confidence. But the editors are trying to drag us back, and are calling their *khvostism* new views on organization!

Listen to the way our so-called Party editors talk about the literary groups that might demand representation on the editorial board. "We shall not get indignant and begin to shout about discipline," we are admonished by these aristocratic anarchists who have always and everywhere looked down on such a thing as discipline. We shall either "arrange the matter" (*sic*!) with the group, if it is businesslike, or just ridicule its demands.

Dear, dear, what a lofty and noble rebuff to vulgar "factory" formalism! But in reality it is the old *circle* phraseology furbished up a little and served up to the Party by an editorial board

which feels that it is not a Party body, but the survival of an old circle. The intrinsic falsity of this position inevitably leads to the *anarchist* profundity of elevating the disunity which they pharisaically proclaim to be obsolete to a *principle* of Social-Democratic organization. There is no need for a hierarchy of higher and lower Party bodies and authorities—aristocratic anarchism regards such a hierarchy as the bureaucratic invention of ministries, departments, etc. (see Axelrod's article), there is no need for the part to submit to the whole; there is no need for any "formal bureaucratic" definition of *Party* methods of "arranging matters" or of parting ways. Let the old circle scrapping be sanctified by pompous talk about "genuinely Social-Democratic" methods of organization.

This is where the proletarian who has been through the school of the "factory" can and should teach a lesson to anarchist individualism. The class-conscious worker has long ago emerged from the state of infancy when he used to fight shy of the intellectual as such. The class-conscious worker prizes the richer store of knowledge and the wider political horizon which he finds in Social-Democratic intellectuals. But as we proceed with the building of a *real* party, the class-conscious worker must learn to distinguish the mentality of the soldier of the proletarian army from the mentality of the bourgeois intellectual.

who flaunts his anarchist talk, he must learn to *insist* that the duties of a Party member be fulfilled not only by the rank and file, but by the "people on top" as well, he must learn to treat *khvostism* in matters of organization with the same contempt with which in the old days he used to treat *khvostism* in matters of tactics¹

Inseparably connected with Girondism and aristocratic anarchism is the last characteristic feature of the new *Iskra's* attitude towards matters of organization, namely, its defence of *autonomism* as against centralism. This is the meaning in principle (if it has any such meaning¹) of its outcry against bureaucracy and autocracy, of its regrets over the "undeserved neglect of the non-*Iskra*-ists" (who defended autonomism at the Congress), of its comical howls about the demand for "unqualified obedience," of its bitter complaints of "pompadour methods," etc., etc. The opportunist wing of any party always defends and justifies all retrograde tendencies, whether in program, tactics or organization. The new *Iskra's* defence of retrograde tendencies in matters of organization (*khvostism*) is closely connected with the defence of *autonomism*. True, autonomism has, generally speaking, been so discredited by the three years' propaganda work of the old *Iskra* that the new *Iskra* is ashamed, as

¹ I leave aside here, as in this chapter generally, the "co-optional" meaning of this outcry

yet, to advocate it openly; it still assures us of its sympathy for centralism, but shows it only by printing the word centralism in italics. Actually, it is enough to apply the slightest touch of criticism to the "principles" of the "true Social-Democratic" (not anarchistic?) quasi-centralism of the new *Iskra* for the autonomist standpoint to be detected at every step. Is it not now clear to all and sundry that on the subject of organization Axelrod and Martov have swung over to Akimov? Have they not solemnly admitted it themselves in the significant words, "undeserved neglect of the non-*Iskra*-ists?" And what was it but autonomism that Akimov and his friends defended at our Party Congress?

It was autonomism (if not anarchism) that Martov and Axelrod defended at the Congress of the League when, with amusing zeal, they tried to prove that the part need not submit to the whole, that the part is autonomous in defining its relation to the whole, that the rules of the League Abroad, in which the relation is thus formulated, are valid, in defiance of the will of the Party majority, in defiance of the will of the Party centre. It is autonomism, too, that Comrade Martov is now openly defending in the columns of the new *Iskra* (No. 60) on the question of the right of the Central Committee to appoint members to the local committees. I shall not speak of the puerile sophistries which Comrade Martov used

to defend autonomism at the Congress of the League, and is still using in the new *Iskra*—the important thing here is to note the undoubted tendency to *defend autonomism as against centralism*, which is a fundamental characteristic of opportunism in matters of organization

Perhaps the only attempt to *analyze* the concept bureaucracy is the distinction drawn in the new *Iskra* (No 53) between the "formal *democratic* principle" (author's italics) and the "formal *bureaucratic* principle" This distinction (which, unfortunately, was no more developed or explained than the allusion to the non-*Iskra*-ists) contains a grain of truth Bureaucracy versus democracy is precisely the same thing as centralism versus autonomism; it is the organizational principle of revolutionary Social-Democracy as opposed to the organizational principle of opportunist Social-Democracy The latter strive to proceed from the bottom upward, and, therefore, wherever possible and as far as possible, uphold autonomism, a "democracy" which is carried (by the overzealous) to the point of anarchism The former strive to proceed from the top downward,

* In enumerating the various paragraphs of the Rules, Comrade Martov *omitted* the very one which deals with the relation of the whole to the part the Central Committee "allocates the Party forces" (§ 6) Can forces be allocated without Party workers being transferred from one committee to another? It is really awkward to have to dwell on such rudimentary things

and uphold an extension of the rights and powers of the centre in respect to the parts. In the period of disunity and the circles, this top from which revolutionary Social-Democracy strove to proceed organizationally was inevitably one of the circles, the one which was most influential because of its activity and its revolutionary consistency (in our case, the *Iskra* organization). In the period of restoration of real Party unity and dissolution of the obsolete circles in this unity, this top is inevitably the *Party Congress*, as the supreme organ of the Party, the Congress as far as possible includes representatives of all the active organizations, and, by appointing the central bodies (often with a membership which satisfies the advanced elements of the Party more than the backward elements, and which is more to the taste of its revolutionary wing than its opportunist wing), makes them the top until the next Congress. Such, at any rate, is the case among the Social-Democratic Europeans, although this custom, which is so detested in principle by the anarchists, is gradually beginning, not without difficulty and not without conflicts and squabbles, to spread to the Social-Democratic Asiatics.

It is highly interesting to note that the fundamental characteristics of opportunism in matters of organization (autonomism, aristocratic or intellectual anarchism, *khivostism* and Girond-

ism) which I have indicated are *mutatis mutandis* (with corresponding modifications) to be observed in all the Social-Democratic parties in the world, wherever there is a division into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing (and where is there not?) This was very strikingly revealed, and only quite recently, in the German Social-Democratic Party, when its defeat at the elections in the 20th electoral division of Saxony (known as the Gohre incident)* brought the question of the *principles* of party organization to the fore. That this incident should have become an issue of principle was largely due to the zeal of the German opportunists Gohre (an ex-parson, author of that not uncelebrated book, *Drei Monate Fabrikarbeiter*, and one of the "heroes" of the Dresden Congress) was himself an extreme opportunist, and the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* (*Socialist Monthly*), the organ of the consistent German opportunists, at once "took up the cudgels" on his behalf.

Opportunism in program is naturally connected with opportunism in tactics and opportu-

* Gohre was returned to the Reichstag on June 16, 1903, from the 15th division of Saxony, but he resigned after the Dresden Congress.²⁸ The electorate of the 20th division, which had fallen vacant on the death of Rosenow, wanted to offer the seat to Gohre. The Central Council of the Party and the Central Agitation Committee for Saxony opposed this, and although they had no formal right to forbid Gohre's nomination, they succeeded in getting him to decline. The Social-Democrats were defeated at the polls.

ism in organization The exposition of the "new" point of view was undertaken by Comrade Wolfgang Heine To give the reader some idea of the political complexion of this typical intellectual, who on joining the Social-Democratic movement brought with him opportunist habits of thought, it is enough to say that Comrade Wolfgang Heine is something less than a German Comrade Akimov and something more than a German Comrade Egorov

Comrade Wolfgang Heine took the warpath in the *Sozialistische Monatshefte* with no less pomp than Comrade Axelrod in the new *Iskra* The very title of his article is priceless "Democratic Observations on the Gohre Incident" (*Sozialistische Monatshefte*, No 4, April) The contents are no less thunderous Comrade W Heine rises up in arms against "encroachments on the autonomy of a constituency," champions the "democratic principle," and protests against the interference of an "appointed authority" (i e, the Central Council of the Party) in the free election of deputies by the people The point at issue, Comrade W Heine admonishes us, is not a casual incident, but a general "*tendency towards bureaucracy and centralism in the Party*," a tendency, he says, which was to be observed before, but which is now becoming particularly dangerous It must be "recognized as a principle that the local institutions of the Party are the vehicles of

Party life" (a plagiarism on Comrade Martov's pamphlet, *Once More in the Minority*). We must not "get accustomed to the idea that all important political decisions must emanate from one centre," and we must warn the Party against "a doctrinaire policy which loses contact with life" (borrowed from Comrade Martov's speech at the Party Congress to the effect that "life will claim its own"). Rendering his argument more profound, Comrade W. Heine says. "...If we go down to the roots of the matter, if we abstract ourselves from personal conflicts, which here, as everywhere, have played no small part, we shall find that this bitterness against the *revtsionists*" (the italics are the author's and evidently hint at a distinction between fighting revisionism and fighting revisionists) "is mainly expressive of the distrust of the Party officials for '*outsiders*'" (W Heine had evidently not yet read the pamphlet about combating the state of siege, and therefore resorted to an Anglicism—*Outsidertum*), "the distrust of tradition for the unusual, of the impersonal institution for everything individual," (see Axelrod's resolution at the League Congress on the suppression of individual initiative) "in a word, that tendency which we have defined above as a tendency toward bureaucracy and centralism in the Party"

The idea of "discipline" inspires Comrade W Heine with a no less noble disgust than Com-

rade Axelrod "The revisionists," he writes, "have been accused of lack of discipline for having written for the *Sozialistische Monatshefte*—whose Social-Democratic character has even been refused recognition because it is not *controlled by the Party* This attempt to narrow down the concept 'Social-Democratic,' this insistence on *discipline* in the sphere of ideological production, where absolute freedom should prevail" (remember that the ideological struggle is a process whereas the forms of organization are only forms) "in themselves point to the tendency towards bureaucracy and the suppression of individuality" And W Heine goes on and on, fulminating against this detestable tendency to create "*one* big all-embracing organization, as centralized as possible, *one* set of tactics and *one* theory," against the demand for "unqualified obedience," "blind submission," against "oversimplified centralism," etc, etc, literally "in the Axelrod manner"

The controversy started by W Heine spread, and as there were no squabbles about co-option in the German Party to obscure the issue, and as the German Akimovs display their complexion not only at congresses, but all the time, in a periodical of their own, the controversy soon boiled down to an analysis of the principles of the orthodox and revisionist trends on the question of organization Karl Kautsky came forward (in

Die Neue Zeit, 1904, No. 28, in an article "Wahlkreis und Partei"—"Constituency and Party") as one of the spokesmen of the revolutionary trend (which, exactly as in our Party, was of course accused of "dictatorship," "inquisitorial" tendencies and other dreadful things) "W. Heine's article," he says, "reveals the line of thought of the whole revisionist trend" Not only in Germany, but in France and Italy as well, the opportunists are all staunch supporters of autonomism, of a slackening of Party discipline, of reducing it to nought, everywhere their tendencies lead to *disorganization* and to corrupting the "democratic principle" and converting it into *anarchism* "Democracy does not mean absence of authority," says Karl Kautsky, instructing the opportunists on the subject of organization, "democracy does not mean anarchy, it means the rule of the masses over their representatives, as distinct from other forms of rule where the supposed servants of the people are in reality their masters" K Kautsky traces at length the disruptive role played by opportunist autonomism in various countries, he shows that it is precisely the fact that "*a great number of bourgeois elements*"* have joined the Social-Democratic

* Karl Kautsky mentioned *Jaurès* as an example The more these people deviated towards opportunism, the more "they were bound to consider Party discipline an impermissible constraint on their free personality"

movement that strengthens opportunism, autonomism and the tendency to violate discipline, and once more he reminds us that "organization is the weapon that will emancipate the proletariat," that "organization is the characteristic weapon of the proletariat in the class struggle"

In Germany, where opportunism is weaker than in France or Italy, "autonomist tendencies have so far led only to more or less high-flown declamations against dictators and grand inquisitors, against excommunication and heresy hunting, and to endless cavilling, which would only result in endless squabbling if replied to by the other side"

It is not surprising that in Russia, where opportunism in the Party is even weaker than in Germany, autonomist tendencies should have produced fewer ideas and more "high-flown declamations" and squabbling

It is not surprising that Kautsky arrives at the following conclusion "There is probably no other issue on which revisionism in all countries, despite its multiplicity of form and hue, is so alike as on the question of organization" Karl Kautsky too defines the basic trends of orthodoxy and revisionism in this sphere by the "dreadful words"

* *Bannstrahl* excommunication This is the German equivalent of the Russian "state of siege" and "emergency laws" It is the "dreadful word" of the German opportunists

bureaucracy versus democracy "We are told," he says, "that to give the Party leadership the right to influence the selection of a candidate (for parliament) by the constituencies would be a 'shameful encroachment on the democratic principle, which demands that all political activity proceed from the bottom upward, by the independent activity of the masses, and not from the top downward, by bureaucratic means'. But if there is any democratic principle, it is that the majority must have its way against the minority, and not the other way round " The election of a member of parliament by any constituency is an important question for the Party as a whole, which should influence the nomination of candidates, if only through the Party's representatives (Vertrauensmänner) "Whoever considers this too bureaucratic or too centralistic let him suggest that candidates be nominated by the direct vote of the whole Party membership (sämtliche Parteigenossen) If he thinks this is not practicable, he must not complain of a lack of democracy when this function, like many others that affect the whole Party, is exercised by one or by several Party bodies " It has long been a "common law" in the German Party for constituencies to "come to a friendly understanding" with the Party leadership about the choice of a candidate "But the Party has grown too big for this tacit common law to suffice any longer Common law

ceases to be a law when it ceases to be regarded as natural and self-evident, when its stipulations, and even its very existence, are called in question. Then it becomes absolutely essential to formulate the law specifically, to codify it," . to adopt a more "precise statutory definition" (statutarische Festlegung) and, accordingly, greater strictness (grossere Straffheit) of organization."

Thus you have, in a different environment, the same struggle between the opportunist wing and the revolutionary wing of the Party on the question of organization, the same conflict between autonomism and centralism, between democracy and "bureaucracy," between the tendency to relax and the tendency to tighten stringent organization and discipline, between the mentality of the unstable intellectual and that of the staunch proletarian, between intellectualist individualism and proletarian solidarity. What, one asks, was the attitude to this conflict of *bourgeois democracy*—not the bourgeois democracy which pranks history has only promised in private to show to Comrade Axelrod some day—but the real and

* It is highly instructive to compare these remarks of K. Kautsky regarding the substitution of formally defined statutory law for the tacitly recognized common law with the "change" which our Party in general, and the editorial board in particular, have been undergoing since the Party Congress. Cf. speech of V. I. Zasulich (at the League Congress, p. 66 et seq.), who hardly realizes the full significance of the present change.

actual bourgeois democracy which in Germany has spokesmen no less clever and observant than our own gentlemen of the *Osvobozhdeniye*? German bourgeois democracy at once reacted to the new controversy and—like Russian bourgeois democracy, like bourgeois democracy always and everywhere—came out solidly in behalf of the opportunist wing of the Social-Democratic Party. The *Frankfurter Zeitung*, leading organ of the German stock exchange, published a thunderous editorial (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, April 7, 1904, No 97, evening edition) which shows that the unscrupulous habit of plagiarizing Axelrod is becoming a veritable disease with the German press. The stern democrats of the Frankfurt stock exchange lash furiously at "autocracy" in the Social-Democratic Party, "party dictatorship," at the "autocratic domination of the Party authorities," at the "excommunications" which are intended "as it were, to chastise all the revisionists" (recall the "false accusation of opportunism"), at the insistence on "blind submission," "deadening discipline," "servile subordination" and the transforming of Party members into "political corpses" (that is much stronger than wheels and cogs!) "All distinctiveness of personality," the knights of the stock exchange indignantly exclaim at the sight of the undemocratic regime in the Social-Democratic Party, "all individuality must be persecuted, don't you see,

for they threaten to lead to the French order of things, to Jaurèsism and Millerandism, as was stated in so many words by Zindermann, who made the report on the subject" at the Party Congress of the Saxon Social-Democrats.

And so, in so far as the new catchwords of the new *Iskra* on organization contain any principles at all, there can be no doubt that they are opportunist principles. This conclusion is moreover confirmed by the whole analysis of our Party Congress which divided up into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, and by the example of *all* European Social-Democratic parties, where opportunism in organization finds expression in the same tendencies, in the same accusations, and very often in the same catchwords. Of course, the national peculiarities of the various parties and the different political conditions in different countries leave their impress and make German opportunism quite dissimilar from French opportunism, French opportunism from Italian opportunism and Italian opportunism from Russian opportunism. But the similarity of the fundamental division of all these parties into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing, the similarity of the line of thought and the tendencies of opportunism in organization stand out clearly in spite of all the difference of conditions

mentioned * The presence of large numbers of radical intellectuals in the ranks of our Marxists and our Social-Democrats has made, and is making, the existence of opportunism, produced by their mentality, inevitable in the most varied spheres and in the most varied forms. We fought opportunism on the fundamental problems of our world conception, on questions of our program, and a complete divergence of aims inevitably led to an irrevocable division between the liberals who had corrupted our legal Marxism and the Social-Democrats. We fought opportunism on tactical questions, and our divergence with Comrades Krichevsky and Akimov on these less important issues was naturally only temporary, and was not accompanied by the

* No one will doubt today that the old division into Economists and politicians among the Russian Social-Democrats on questions of tactics was similar to the division of the whole international Social-Democratic movement into opportunists and revolutionaries, although the difference between Comrades Martynov and Akimov, on the one hand, and Comrades von Vollmar and von Elm or Jaures and Millerand, on the other, is very great. Nor is there any doubt about the similarity of the main divisions on questions of organization, in spite of the enormous difference between the conditions of politically unfranchised and politically free countries. It is extremely characteristic that the highly principled editors of the new *Iskra*, while briefly touching on the controversy between Kautsky and Heine (No 64), fearfully evaded the trends of *principle* of opportunism and orthodoxy in *general* on questions of organization.

formation of different parties. We must now vanquish the opportunism of Martov and Axelrod on questions of organization, which are, of course, even less fundamental than questions of program and tactics, but which have now come to the forefront in our Party life

When we speak of fighting opportunism, we must never forget a feature that is characteristic of present-day opportunism in every sphere, namely, its vagueness, diffuseness, elusiveness. An opportunist, by his very nature, will always evade formulating an issue clearly and decisively, he will always seek a middle course, he will always wriggle like a snake between two mutually exclusive points of view and try to "agree" with both and to reduce his differences of opinion to petty amendments, doubts, good and pious suggestions, and so on and so forth. Comrade Eduard Bernstein, an opportunist in questions of program, "agrees" with the revolutionary program of his party, and although he is most likely anxious to have it "radically revised," he considers it inopportune and inexpedient, and not so important as the elucidation of "general principles" of "criticism" (which mainly consist in uncritically borrowing principles and catchwords from bourgeois democracy). Comrade von Vollmar, an opportunist in questions of tactics, also agrees with the old tactics of revolutionary Social-Democracy and also confines himself mostly to declamations, pet-

ty amendments and sneers rather than openly advocating any definite "ministerial" tactics Comrades Martov and Axelrod, opportunists in questions of organization, have also so far failed to produce, though directly challenged to do so, any definite statement of principles that could be "fixed by statute", they too would like, they most certainly would like, a "radical reform" of our rules of organization (*Iskra*, No 58, p 2, col 3), but they would prefer to devote themselves first to "general problems of organization" (for a really radical reform of our Rules, which, in spite of §1, are centralist rules, would inevitably lead, if carried out in the spirit of the new *Iskra*, to autonomism, and Comrade Martov, of course, does not like to admit even to himself that, *in principle*, his trend is towards autonomism) Their "principles" of organization therefore display all the colours of the rainbow the predominant note is innocent and high-sounding declamations against autocracy and bureaucracy, against blind obedience and wheels and cogs—declamations that are so innocent that it is very, very difficult to discern in them what is really concerned with principle and what is really concerned with co-option But the further you go, the worse it gets attempts to analyze and precisely define this detestable "bureaucracy" inevitably lead to autonomism, attempts to "deepen" and justify inevitably lead to vindicating backward-

ness, to *khvostism*, to Girondist phrasemongering. At last there emerges the principle of *anarchism*, as the sole really definite principle, which for that reason stands out in practice in particular relief (practice is always in advance of theory). Sneering at discipline—autonomism—anarchism—there you have the ladder by which our opportunism in the sphere of organization now climbs and now descends, skipping from rung to rung and skilfully evading any definite statement of its principles.* Exactly the same stages are

* Those who recall the debate on §1 will now clearly see that the mistake committed by Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod in connection with §1 had *inevitably* to lead, when developed and deepened, to opportunism in matters of organization. Comrade Martov's fundamental idea—self-enrollment in the Party—was nothing but false "democracy," the idea of building the Party from the bottom upward. My idea, on the other hand, was "bureaucratic" in the sense that the Party was to be built from the top downward, from the Party Congress to the individual Party organizations. The mentality of the bourgeois intellectual, anarchist phrasemongering, and opportunist, *khvostist* profundity were all to be discerned already in the debate on §1. Comrade Martov says (*A State of Siege*, p. 20) that "new ideas are beginning to be worked out" by the new *Iskra*. That is true in the sense that he and Axelrod are really pushing ideas in a new direction, beginning with §1. The only trouble is that this direction is an opportunist one. The more they "work" in *this* direction, the more this work is cleared of squabbling over co-option, the deeper will they sink in the mire. Comrade Plekhanov clearly perceived this event already at the Party Congress, and in his article "What Should Not Be Done?" warned them once again "I am prepared," he as much as

displayed by opportunism in questions of program and tactics sneering at "orthodoxy," narrowness and immobility—revisionist "criticism" and ministerialism—bourgeois democracy

There is a close psychological connection between this hatred of discipline and that incessant nagging note of *injury* which is to be detected in all the writings of all opportunists today in general, and of our minority in particular. They are being persecuted, hounded, ejected, besieged and bullied. There is far more psychological and political truth in these catchwords than was probably suspected even by the author of the pleasant and witty joke about bullies and bullied. For you have only to take the minutes of our Party Congress to see that the minority are all those who suffer from a sense of injury, all those who at one time or another and for one reason or another were offended by the revolutionary Social-Democrats. There are the Bundists and the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists, whom we "offended"

said, "even to co-opt you, but do not continue along this road which can only lead to opportunism and anarchism." Martov and Axelrod would not follow this good advice: "What, not continue along this road, and agree with Lenin that co-optation is nothing but squabbling? Never! We'll show him that we are men of principle!"—And they did. They have clearly shown to everyone that if they have any new principles at all, they are opportunist principles.

so badly that they withdrew from the Congress; there are the *Yuzhny Rabochy*-ists, who were mortally offended by the slaughter of all organizations in general and of their own in particular; there is Comrade Makhov, who had to put up with offence every time he took the floor (for every time he did, he invariably made a fool of himself), and lastly, there are Comrade Martov and Comrade Axelrod, who were offended by the "false accusation of opportunism" in connection with §1 of the Rules and by their defeat in the elections. All these mortal offences were not the accidental outcome of impermissible witticisms, rude behaviour, frenzied controversy, slamming of doors and shaking of fists, as so many philistines imagine to this day, but the inevitable political outcome of the whole three years' ideological work of the *Iskra*. If in the course of these three years we were not just wagging our tongues, but giving expression to convictions which were to be transformed into deeds, we could not but fight the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Marsh" at the Congress. And when, together with Comrade Martov, who had fought in the front line with vizer up, we had offended such heaps of people, very little remained, we had only to offend Comrade Axelrod and Comrade Martov ever so little, for the cup to overflow. Quantity was transformed into quality. The negation was negated. All the offended forgot their mutual squabbles, fell weep-

ing into each other's arms, and raised the banner of "revolt against Leninism"

A revolt is a splendid thing when it is the advanced elements who revolt against the reactionary elements. When the revolutionary wing revolts against the opportunist wing, it is a good thing. When the opportunist wing revolts against the revolutionary wing, it is a bad business.

Comrade Plekhanov is compelled to take part in this bad business in the capacity of a prisoner of war, so to speak. He tries to "vent his spleen" by fishing out isolated clumsy phrases by the author of some resolution in favour of the "majority," and exclaiming "Poor Comrade Lenin! Some orthodox supporters he has!" (*Iskra*, No 63, Supplement)

Well, Comrade Plekhanov, all I can say is that if I am poor, the editors of the new *Iskra* are downright paupers. However poor I may be, I have not yet reached such utter destitution as to have to shut my eyes to the Party Congress and hunt for material for the exercise of my wit in the resolutions of committeemen. However poor I may be, I am a thousand times better off than those whose supporters do not utter a clumsy

* This amazing expression is Comrade Martov's (*A State of Siege*, p. 68). Comrade Martov waited until he was five to one before raising the "revolt" against me. Comrade Martov argues very unskillfully; he wants to destroy his opponent by paying him the highest compliments.

phrase inadvertently, but on every issue—whether in relation to organization, tactics or program—stubbornly and steadfastly adhere to principles which are the very opposite of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy. However poor I may be, I have not yet reached the stage where I have to *conceal from the public* the praises lavished on me by such supporters. And that is what the editors of the new *Iskra* have to do.

Reader, do you know what the Voronezh Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labour Party stands for? If not, read the minutes of the Party Congress. You will learn from them that the line of that committee is fully expressed by Comrade Akimov and Comrade Brouckère, who at the Congress fought the revolutionary wing of the Party all along the line, and who scores of times were ranked as opportunists by everybody, from Comrade Plekhanov to Comrade Popov. Well, this Voronezh Committee, in its January leaflet (No 12, January, 1904), makes the following statement:

“ A great and important event in the life of our steadily growing Party took place last year: the Second Congress of the RSDLP, a Congress of the representatives of its organizations, was held. Convening a party congress is a very complicated business, and, under the monarchy, a dangerous and difficult one. It is therefore not surprising that it was carried out *in a far from perfect way*, and that the Congress itself, although it passed off without mishap, did not live up to all the Party's

expectations. The comrades whom the Conference of 1902 commissioned to convene the Congress were arrested, and the Congress was arranged by persons who represented only one of the trends in Russian Social-Democracy, viz, the "Iskra"-ists. Many organizations of Social-Democrats who did not happen to be *Iskra*-ists were not enlisted to take part in the work of the Congress, *this is one of the reasons why* the task of drawing up a program and rules for the Party was carried out by the Congress in an *extremely imperfect way*, the delegates themselves admit that there are important flaws in the rules 'which may lead to dangerous misunderstandings'. The *Iskra*-ists themselves split at the Congress, and many prominent workers in our RSDLP who hitherto had appeared to be in full agreement with the *Iskra* program of action have admitted that many of its views, advocated *mainly by Lenin and Plekhanov*, are impracticable. Although the latter gained the upper hand at the Congress, the mistakes of the theoreticians are being quickly corrected by the forces of real life and the demands of real work, in which all the non-*Iskra*-ists are taking part and which, since the Congress, have introduced important amendments. *The "Iskra" has undergone a profound change and promises to pay careful heed to the demands of all workers in the Social-Democratic movement generally.* Thus, although *the work of the Congress will have to be revised at the next Congress*, and, as is obvious to the delegates themselves, was unsatisfactory, *and therefore cannot be accepted by the Party as unimpeachable decisions*, the Congress has cleared up the situation inside the Party, has provided much material for the further theoretical and organizational work of the Party, and has been an experience of immense instructive value for the general work of the Party. The decisions of the Congress and the rules it has drawn up will be *taken into account* by all the organiza-

tions, but many will *refrain from being guided by them exclusively, in view of* their obvious imperfections

"Fully realizing the importance of the general work of the Party, the Voronezh Committee actively *responded* in all matters concerning the organization of the Congress. It fully recognizes the importance of what has taken place at the Congress and *welcomes the change undergone by the 'Iskra,'* which has become the Central Organ (chief organ). Although the state of affairs in the Party and in the Central Committee does not satisfy us *as yet,* we are confident that by common effort the difficult work of organizing the Party *will* be perfected. In view of false rumours, the Voronezh Committee informs the comrades that there is no question of the Voronezh Committee leaving the Party. The Voronezh Committee realizes perfectly what a dangerous precedent might be created by the withdrawal of a workers' organization like the Voronezh Committee from the R S D L P, *what a reproach this would be to the Party,* and how disadvantageous it would be to workers' organizations which might follow this example. We must not cause new splits, but persistently strive to unite all class-conscious workers and Socialists in one party. Besides, the Second Congress was not a constituent congress, but an ordinary one. Expulsion from the Party can only be by decision of a Party court, and no organization, not even the Central Committee, has the right to expel any Social-Democratic organization from the Party. Furthermore, the Second Congress adopted par-

agraph 8 of the Rules, according to which every organization is autonomous in its local affairs, and this *fully entitles the Voronezh Committee to put its views on organization into practice and advocate them in the Party.*"

The editors of the new *Isk1a*, in quoting this leaflet in No 61, reprinted the second half of this tirade, which we give here in large type, as for the first half, here printed in small type, the editors *preferred to omit it*

They were ashamed

R A FEW WORDS ON DIALECTICS. TWO REVOLUTIONS

A general glance at the development of our Party crisis will readily show that in the main, with minor exceptions, the composition of the two contending sides remained unchanged throughout. It was a struggle between the revolutionary wing and the opportunist wing in our Party. But this struggle passed through the most varied stages, and anyone who wants to make his way through the vast amount of literature that has already been accumulated, the mass of fragmentary evidence, passages torn from their context, isolated accusations, and so on and so forth, must thoroughly familiarize himself with the peculiarities of each of these stages.

Let us enumerate the principal and clearly distinct stages. 1) The dispute over §1 of the Rules. A purely ideological struggle over the basic principles of organization. Plekhanov and I are in the minority. Martov and Axelrod propose an opportunist formulation and find them-

selves in the arms of the opportunists 2) The split in the *Iskra* organization over the lists of candidates to the Central Committee Fomin or Vasilyev in a committee of five, or Trotsky or Travinsky in a committee of three Plekhanov and I gain the majority (nine to seven), partly because of the very fact that we were in the minority on §1 Martov's coalition with the opportunists confirmed my worst fears raised by the Organization Committee incident 3) Continuation of the debate on the details of the Rules Martov is again saved by the opportunists We are again in the minority and fight for the rights of the minority on the central bodies 4) The seven extreme opportunists withdraw from the Congress We become the majority and defeat the coalition (the *Iskra* minority, the "Marsh" and the anti-*Iskra*-ists) in the elections Martov and Popov decline to accept seats in our trios 5) The post-Congress squabble over co-option An orgy of anarchist behaviour and anarchist phrasemongering The least consistent and stable elements of the "minority" gain the upper hand 6) To avert a split, Plekhanov adopts the policy of "killing with kindness" The "minority" occupy the editorial board of the Central Organ and the Council and attack the Central Committee with all their might The squabble continues to pervade everything. 7) First attack on the Central Committee repulsed The squabble seems

to be somewhat subsiding. It becomes possible to discuss in comparative calm two purely ideological questions which profoundly agitate the Party a) what is the political significance and explanation of the division of our Party into a "majority" and a "minority" which took shape at the Second Congress and replaced all earlier divisions and b) what is the significance from the standpoint of principle of the new position of the new *Iskra* on the question of organization?

In each of these stages the circumstances of the struggle and the immediate object of attack are essentially different; each stage is, as it were, a separate battle in one general military campaign. Our struggle cannot be understood at all unless the concrete circumstances of each battle are studied. But once that is done we shall clearly find that the development does actually proceed dialectically, by way of contradictions: the minority becomes the majority, and the majority becomes the minority, each side passes from the defensive to the offensive, and from the offensive to the defensive, the starting point of the ideological struggle (§1) is "negated" and gives place to an all-pervading squabble, but

* The difficult problem of drawing a line between squabbling and a difference of principle now solves itself: all that relates to co-optation is squabbling, all that relates to an analysis of the struggle at the Congress, to the dispute over §1 and to the swing towards opportunism and anarchism is a difference of principle.

then begins the "negation of the negation," and, having found a way of living more or less in "peace and harmony" on the various central bodies, we return to the starting point, the purely ideological struggle, but by now this "thesis" has been enriched by all the results of the "antithesis" and has become a higher synthesis, in which the isolated, casual error in connection with §1 has grown into a quasi system of opportunist views on matters of organization, and in which the connection between this fact and the basic division of our Party into a revolutionary wing and an opportunist wing becomes increasingly apparent to all. In a word, not only do oats grow according to Hegel, but the Russian Social-Democrats war among themselves according to Hegel.

But the great Hegelian dialectics which Marxism made its own, having first turned it right side up, must never be confused with the vulgar trick of justifying the zigzags of politicians who swing over from the revolutionary wing to the opportunist wing of the Party, or with the vulgar habit of lumping together distinct statements distinct incidents in the development of different stages of a single process. Genuine dialectics does not justify individual errors, but studies the inevitable turns, proving that they were inevitable by a detailed study of the process of development in all its concreteness. The basic

principle of dialectics is that there is no such thing as abstract truth, truth is always concrete ... And, one thing more, the great Hegelian dialectics should never be confused with that vulgar worldly wisdom so well expressed by the Italian saying *mettere la coda dove non va il capo* (sticking in the tail where the head will not go through)

The result of the dialectical development of our Party struggle reduces itself to two revolutions. The Party Congress was a real revolution, as Comrade Martov justly remarked in his "Once More in the Minority." The wits of the minority are also right when they say "The world moves in revolutions, well, we have made a revolution!" They did indeed carry through a revolution after the Congress, and it is true, too, that generally speaking the world does move in revolutions. But the concrete significance of each concrete revolution is not defined by this general aphorism; there are revolutions which are more like reaction, to paraphrase the unforgettable expression of the unforgettable Comrade Makhov. We must know whether it was the revolutionary wing or the opportunist wing of the Party which was the actual force that made the revolution, we must know whether it was revolutionary or opportunist principles that inspired the fighters, before we can determine whether the "world" (our Party) was

moved forward or backward by any concrete revolution

Our Party Congress was unique and unprecedented in the entire history of the Russian revolutionary movement. For the first time a secret revolutionary party succeeded in emerging from the darkness of underground life into broad daylight, displaying to the world the whole course and outcome of the struggle within our Party, the whole nature of our Party and of each of its more or less noticeable sections on questions of program, tactics and organization. For the first time we succeeded in throwing off the traditions of circle looseness and revolutionary philistinism, in bringing together dozens of the most varied groups, many of which had been fiercely warring among themselves and had been linked together solely by the force of an idea and were prepared (in principle, that is) to sacrifice all their group aloofness and group independence for the sake of the great whole which we were for the first time actually creating—the *Party*. But in politics sacrifices are not obtained gratis, they have to be won in battle. The battle over the slaughter of the organizations was bound to be terribly fierce. The fresh breeze of free and open struggle blew into a gale. The gale swept away—and a good thing that it did!—every conceivable remnant of the circle interests, sentiments and traditions without exception, and for

the first time created authoritative bodies that were really Party bodies.

But it is one thing to call oneself something, and another to be it. It is one thing to sacrifice the circle system in principle for the sake of the Party, and another to renounce one's own circle. The fresh breeze proved to be as yet too fresh for those who were used to musty philistinism. "The Party was unable to stand the strain of its first congress," as Comrade Martov rightly put it (inadvertently) in his "Once More in the Minority." The sense of injury over the slaughter of the organizations was too strong. The furious gale raised all the mud from the bottom of our Party stream; and the mud took its revenge. The old hidebound circle spirit overpowered the still young Party spirit. The opportunist wing of the Party, utterly routed though it had been, gained—temporarily, of course—the upper hand over the revolutionary wing, having been accidentally reinforced by the Akimov windfall.

The result is the new *Iskra*, which is compelled to develop and deepen the error its editors committed at the Party Congress. The old *Iskra* taught the truths of revolutionary struggle. The new *Iskra* teaches the worldly wisdom of yielding and living in harmony with everyone. The old *Iskra* was the organ of militant orthodoxy. The new *Iskra* treats us to a recrudescence of opportunism—chiefly on questions of organiza-

tion The old *Iskra* earned the honour of being disliked by the opportunists, both Russian and West-European The new *Iskra* has "grown wise" and will soon cease to be ashamed of the praises lavished on it by the extreme opportunists The old *Iskra* marched unswervingly towards its goal, and there was no discrepancy between its word and its deed. The inherent falsity of the position of the new *Iskra* inevitably leads—independently even of anyone's will or intention—to political hypocrisy. It cries out against the circle spirit in order to conceal the victory of the circle spirit over the Party spirit It pharisaically condemns splits, as if one can imagine any way of avoiding splits in any at all organized party worthy of the name except by the subordination of the minority to the majority. It says that heed must be paid to revolutionary public opinion, yet, while concealing the praises of the Akimovs, it indulges in petty scandalmongering about the committees of the revolutionary wing of the Party - How shameful! How they have disgraced our old *Iskra*!

One step forward, two steps back . . . It happens in the lives of individuals, and it happens in the history of nations and in the development

* A stereotyped form has even been worked out for this charming pastime our special correspondent X informs us that Committee Y of the majority has badly treated Comrade Z of the minority

of parties It would be the greatest criminal cowardice to doubt even for a moment the inevitable and complete triumph of the principles of revolutionary Social-Democracy, of proletarian organization and Party discipline We have already won a great deal, and we must go on fighting, without being discouraged by reverses, fighting steadfastly, scorning the philistine methods of circle scrapping, doing our very utmost to preserve the single Party tie among all the Russian Social-Democrats which has been established at the cost of so much effort, and striving by dint of stubborn and systematic work to make all Party members, and the workers in particular, fully and intelligently acquainted with the duties of Party members, with the struggle at the Second Party Congress, with all the causes and all the stages of our disagreements, and with the utter disastrousness of opportunism, which, in the sphere of organization, as in the sphere of our program and our tactics, helplessly surrenders to the bourgeois psychology, uncritically adopts the point of view of bourgeois democracy, and blunts the weapon of the class struggle of the proletariat

In its struggle for power the proletariat has no other weapon but organization. Disunited by the rule of anarchic competition in the bourgeois world, ground down by forced labour for capital, constantly thrust back to the "lower depths" of

utter destitution, savagery and degeneration, the proletariat can become, and inevitably will become, an invincible force only when its ideological unification by the principles of Marxism is consolidated by the material unity of an organization which will weld millions of toilers into an army of the working class. Neither the decrepit rule of Russian Tsardom, nor the senile rule of international capital will be able to withstand this army. Its ranks will become more and more serried, in spite of all zigzags and backward steps, in spite of the opportunist phrasemongering of the Girondists of present-day Social-Democracy, in spite of the smug praise of the antiquated circle spirit, and in spite of the tinsel and fuss of *intellectual* anarchism

Appendix

THE INCIDENT OF COMRADE GUSEV AND COMRADE DEUTSCH

The substance of this incident, which has a very close bearing on the so-called "false" (Comrade Martov's expression) list mentioned in the letter of Comrades Martov and Starover and which has been quoted in chapter J, is as follows. Comrade Gusev informed Comrade Pavlovich that this list, consisting of Comrades Stein, Egorov, Popov, Trotsky and Fomin, was handed to him, Gusev, by Comrade Deutsch (Comrade Pavlovich's *Letter*, p. 12). Comrade Deutsch accused Comrade Gusev, on account of this statement, of "deliberate calumny," and a comrades' arbitration court declared Comrade Gusev's "statement" "*incorrect*" (see the court's decision in the *Iskra*, No 62). After the editorial board of the *Iskra* had published the court decision, Comrade Martov (not the editorial board this time) issued a special leaflet entitled *The Decision of the Comrades' Arbitration Court* in which he reprinted in full, not only the decision

of the court, but the whole report of the proceedings, together with an *afterword of his own*. In this afterword, Comrade Martov among other things declares that "the forgery of a list in the interests of a factional struggle" was a "disgraceful fact." Comrades Lyadov and Gorin, who had been delegates to the Second Congress, replied to this leaflet by one of their own entitled *An Onlooker at the Arbitration Court*, in which they "vigorously protest against Comrade Martov allowing himself to go further than the court decision and ascribing evil motives to Comrade Gusev," whereas the court had not found that there had been a deliberate calumny, but only that Comrade Gusev's statement was incorrect. Comrades Gorin and Lyadov explained at length that Comrade Gusev's statement might have been due to a quite natural mistake, and described as "*unworthy*" the conduct of Comrade Martov who had himself made (and makes in his leaflet) a number of erroneous statements, arbitrarily attributing evil intent to Comrade Gusev. There could be no evil intent here in general, they said. That, if I am not mistaken, is all the "literature" on this question, which I consider it my duty to help elucidate.

First of all, it is essential that the reader have a clear idea of the time and conditions in which this list (a list of candidates for the Central Committee) appeared. As I have already

stated in this pamphlet, the *Iskra* organization held a conference during the Congress to draw up a list of candidates for the Central Committee which it could jointly submit to the Congress. The conference ended in disagreement: the majority of the *Iskra* organization adopted a list consisting of Travinsky, Glebov, Vasilyev, Popov and Trotsky, but the minority refused to yield and insisted on a list consisting of Travinsky, Glebov, Fomin, Popov and Trotsky. The two sections of the *Iskra* organization never met again after the meeting at which these lists were drawn up and voted on. Both sections entered the arena of free agitation at the Congress, desiring to have the question at issue between them settled by a vote of the whole Party Congress and each endeavouring to win over to its side as large a number of delegates as possible. This free agitation at the Congress at once revealed the political fact which I have analyzed in such detail in this pamphlet, namely, that in order to score victory over us it was essential for the *Iskra*-ist minority (headed by Martov) to rely for support on the "Centre" (the Marsh) and on the anti-*Iskra*-ists. This was essential because the vast majority of the delegates who consistently upheld the program, tactics and organizational plans of the *Iskra* against the onslaught of the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Centre" very soon and very staunchly took up their stand on our side. Of the thirty-

three delegates (or, rather, votes) not belonging either to the anti-*Iskra*-ists or to the "Centre," we very soon won twenty-four and concluded a "direct agreement" with them and formed a "compact majority." Comrade Martov, on the other hand, was left with only nine votes, in order to gain the victory, he needed all the votes of the anti-*Iskra*-ists and the "Centre"—with which groups he might join forces (as over §1 of the Rules), might form a "coalition," that is, might have their support, but with which he *could not* conclude a direct agreement—could not for the very reason that throughout the Congress he had fought these groups no less sharply than we had. Therein lay the tragicomedy of Comrade Martov's position! Comrade Martov, in his *A State of Siege*, tries to annihilate me with the deadly and venomous question "We would respectfully request Comrade Lenin to answer explicitly—to *whom* were the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group strangers at the Congress?" (P 23, footnote) I respectfully and explicitly reply they were strangers to Comrade Martov. And the proof is that I very soon concluded a direct agreement with the *Iskra*-ists, whereas Comrade Martov did not conclude, and could not have concluded, a direct agreement with the *Yuzhny Rabochy* group, nor with Comrade Makhov, nor with Comrade Brouckère.

Only when we have got a clear idea of this

political situation can we understand the "crux" of this sore question of the celebrated "false" list. Picture to yourself the actual state of affairs: the *Iskra* organization has split, and we are freely agitating at the Congress, each defending his own list. In the process of this defence, in the course of hosts of private conversations, the lists are varied in a hundred different combinations: a committee of three is proposed instead of five, all sorts of substitutions of one candidate for another are suggested. I very well recall, for instance, that the candidatures of Comrades Russov, Osipov, Pavlovich and Dye-dov³⁹ were suggested in private conversations among the majority, and then, after discussions and disputes, were withdrawn. It may very well be that other candidates were proposed of whom I have no knowledge. Every delegate at the Congress expressed his own opinion in the course of these conversations, suggested changes, argued and so on. It is highly unlikely that this was the case only among the majority. There is no doubt, in fact, that the same sort of thing went on among the minority, for their original five (Popov, Trotsky, Fomin, Glebov and Travinsky) were later replaced, as we have seen from the letter of Comrades Martov and Starover, by a trio—Glebov, Trotsky and Popov—and, moreover, Glebov not being to their taste, they were glad to replace him by Fomin (see the leaflet

of Comrades Lyadov and Gorin) It should not be forgotten that the demarcation of the groups into which I divide the Congress delegates in this pamphlet was made on the basis of an analysis undertaken post-factum, actually, during the election agitation these groups were only just beginning to be formed, and the exchange of opinions among the delegates proceeded quite freely, no "wall" divided us, and each of us would speak to any delegate he wanted to discuss matters with in private Such being the case, it is not at all surprising that, amidst all the various combinations and lists, there should arise, alongside with the list of the minority of the *Iskra* organization (Popov, Trotsky, Fomin, Glebov and Travinsky), another list which was not very different from it, namely, Popov, Trotsky, Fomin, Stein and Egorov The appearance of such a combination of candidates was perfectly natural, because our candidates, Glebov and Travinsky, were patently not to the liking of the minority of the *Iskra* organization (see their letter in chapter J, of this pamphlet, where they remove Travinsky from the trio and explicitly state that Glebov is a compromise) The substitution of Stein and Egorov, members of the Organization Committee, for Glebov and Travinsky was perfectly natural, and it would have been strange if such a substitution had not occurred

to any of the delegates belonging to the Party minority.

Let us now examine the following two questions. 1) who originated the list Egorov, Stein, Popov, Trotsky and Fomin? and 2) why was Comrade Martov so profoundly indignant that such a list was attributed to him? To give a *precise* answer to the first question, it would be necessary to interrogate all the Congress delegates. That is now impossible. It would be necessary, in particular to ascertain which delegates belonging to the Party minority (not to be confused with the minority of the *Iskra* organization) had heard at the Congress of the lists which caused the split in the *Iskra* organization; what had been their attitude to the two lists, that of the majority and that of the minority of the *Iskra* organization; and whether they themselves had suggested or heard others suggest or express an opinion about desirable changes in the list of the minority of the *Iskra* organization. Unfortunately, these questions were apparently not raised in the arbitration court either, which (to judge by the text of its decision) was not even aware which lists of five had caused the split in the *Iskra* organization. Comrade Byelov, for example (whom I class among the "Centre"), "testified that he was on good comradely terms with Deutsch, who used to share with him his impressions of the work of the Congress, and that if Deutsch had

been carrying on agitation on behalf of any list he would have informed Byelov of the fact" It is to be regretted that it was not brought out whether Comrade Deutsch at the Congress shared with Comrade Byelov his impressions as to the lists of the *Iskra* organization, and, if he did, what was the attitude of Comrade Byelov to the list of five proposed by the minority of the *Iskra* organization, and whether he himself suggested or heard others suggest any desirable changes to it. Because this has not been made clear, we get that contradiction in the evidence of Comrade Byelov and Comrade Deutsch which has already been noted by Comrades Gorin and Lyadov, namely, that Comrade Deutsch, notwithstanding his own assertions to the contrary, "did carry on agitation on behalf of certain candidates to the Central Committee" suggested by the *Iskra* organization. Comrade Byelov further testified that "he heard about a list circulating at the Congress from a private source a day or two before the Congress closed, when he met Comrades Egorov and Popov and the delegates from the Kharkov Committee. Egorov had then expressed surprise that his name had been included in the list of candidates for the Central Committee, as in his, Egorov's, opinion, his candidature could not inspire sympathy among the Congress delegates, whether of the majority or of the minority." It is extremely significant that the reference here

is apparently to the minority of the *Iskra* organization, for among the rest of the minority at the Party Congress the candidature of Comrade Egorov, a member of the Organization Committee and a prominent speaker of the "Centre," not only could, but in all likelihood would have been greeted sympathetically. Unfortunately, we learn nothing from Comrade Byelov as to the sympathies or antipathies of those members of the Party minority who did not belong to the *Iskra* organization. And yet that is just what is important, for Comrade Deutsch was indignant at the fact that this list had been attributed to the minority of the *Iskra* organization, whereas it might have emanated from the minority which did not belong to that organization!

Of course, it is very difficult at this date to recall who was the first to suggest this combination of candidates, and from whom each of us heard about it. I, for example, do not undertake to recall not only this, but even who was the first among the majority to propose the candidatures of Russov, Dyedov and the others I have mentioned. The only thing that sticks in my memory out of the host of conversations, suggestions and rumours of all sorts of combinations of candidates, are those "lists" which were directly put to the vote in the *Iskra* organization or at the private meetings of the majority. These "lists" were mostly circulated orally (in my *Letter to the*

"Iskra" Editorial Board, p 4, line 5 from the bottom, it is the combination of five candidates which I orally proposed at the meeting that I call a "list"), but very often they were jotted down in notes, such as in general passed between delegates during the sittings of the Congress and were usually destroyed after the sittings

Since we have no precise evidence as to the origin of this celebrated list, it can only be presumed either that some delegate belonging to the Party minority, without the knowledge of the minority of the *Iskra* organization, suggested the combination of candidates we have in this list, which then began to circulate at the Congress in spoken or written form, or else that this combination was suggested at the Congress by some member of the minority of the *Iskra* organization who subsequently forgot about it. The latter assumption seems to me the more likely one, for the following reasons: the candidature of Comrade Stein was *undoubtedly* greeted sympathetically by the minority of the *Iskra* organization already at the Congress (see the text of this pamphlet), and as to the candidature of Comrade Egorov, *this* minority undoubtedly arrived at this idea after the Congress (for both at the League Congress and in *A State of Siege* it was regretted that the Organization Committee had not been endorsed as the Central Committee—and Comrade Egorov was a member of the Organization

Committee). Is it then not natural to assume that this idea, which was evidently in the air, of converting the members of the Organization Committee into members of the Central Committee, was suggested by some member of the minority in private conversation at the Party Congress too?

But instead of a natural explanation, Comrade Martov and Comrade Deutsch are determined to see something *sordid*—a plot, a piece of dishonesty, the dissemination of "*patently false rumours with the object of defaming,*" a "*forgery in the interests of a factional struggle,*" and so forth. This morbid urge can only be explained by the unwholesome conditions of life prevailing among émigrés, or by an abnormal nervous condition, and I would not even have dwelt on this question if matters had not gone to the length of an unworthy attack upon the honour of a comrade. Just think what reason could Comrades Deutsch and Martov have had for detecting a sordid, evil intent in an incorrect statement, in an incorrect rumour? The picture which their morbid imaginations conjured up was apparently that the majority "defamed" them, not by pointing to a political mistake committed by the minority (§1 and the coalition with the opportunists) but by attributing to the minority "*patently false*" and "*forged*" lists. The minority preferred to explain the matter not by their

own mistake, but by the sordid, dishonest and disgraceful practices of the majority! How irrational it was to seek for evil intent in the "incorrect statement," we have already shown above, by describing how matters stood. This was clearly realized by the comrades' arbitration court too, which did not find any calumny, or any evil intent, or anything disgraceful. Lastly, this is most clearly proved by the fact that even at the Party Congress, even prior to the elections, the minority of the *Iskra* organization exchanged views with the majority regarding this false rumour, and that Comrade Martov even stated his views in a letter which was read at a meeting of all the twenty-four delegates of the majority! It never even occurred to the majority of the *Iskra* organization to conceal from the minority that such a list was circulating at the Congress; Comrade Lensky told Comrade Deutsch about it (see the court decision), Comrade Plekhanov spoke to Comrade Zasulich about it ("you can't talk to her, she seems to take me for Trepov," Comrade Plekhanov said to me, and this joke, which has been repeated many times since, is one more indication of the abnormal state of excitement the minority were in), and I informed Comrade Martov that his assurance (that the list was not his, Martov's) was quite enough for me (*League Minutes*, p. 64). Comrade Martov (together with Comrade Starover, if I remember

ightly) thereupon sent a note to us on the Bureau which roughly ran as follows. "The majority of the *Iskra* editorial board request to be allowed to attend the private meeting of the majority in order to refute the defamatory rumours which are being circulated about them." Plekhanov and I replied on the same slip of paper, saying "We have not heard any defamatory rumours. If a meeting of the editorial board is required, that should be arranged separately. Lenin, Plekhanov." At the meeting of the majority held that evening, we related this to all the twenty-four delegates. To preclude all possible misunderstanding, it was decided to elect delegates from all the twenty-four of us jointly and send them to talk it over with Comrades Martov and Starover. The delegates elected, Comrades Sorokin and Sablina, went and explained that nobody was attributing the list especially to Martov or Starover, particularly after their statement, and that it was of absolutely no importance whether this list emanated from the minority of the *Iskra* organization or from the minority of the Congress not belonging to the *Iskra* organization. After all, we could not start an investigation at the Congress and question all the delegates about this list! But Comrades Martov and Starover sent us yet another letter containing a formal denial (see chapter J). This letter was read out by our representatives, Comrades Soro-

kin and Sablina, at a meeting of the twenty-four. It might have seemed that the incident could be considered closed—not in the sense that the origin of the list had been ascertained (if anybody cared about that), but in the sense that the idea had been completely dispelled that there was any intention whatsoever of “injuring the minority,” or of “defaming” anybody, or of taking advantage of a “forgery in the interests of a factional struggle.” Yet at the League Congress (pp. 63-64) Comrade Martov again brought forth this sordid story conjured up by a morbid imagination, and, what is more, made a number of *incorrect statements* (evidently due to his wrought up condition). He said that the list included a Bundist. That is untrue. All the witnesses in the arbitration court, including Comrades Stein and Byelov, declared that the list had Comrade Egorov in it. Comrade Martov said that the list implied a coalition in the sense of a direct agreement. That is untrue, as I have already explained. Comrade Martov said that there were no other lists emanating from the minority of the *Iskra* organization (and likely to repel the majority of the Congress from this minority), “not even forged ones.” That is untrue, for the entire majority at the Party Congress knew of no less than three lists emanating from Comrade Martov and Co. which did not meet with the approval of the majority (see the leaflet by Lyadov and Gorin).

Why, in general, was Comrade Martov so incensed by this list? Because it signified a swing towards the Right wing of the Party. At that time Comrade Martov cried out against the "false accusation of opportunism" and expressed indignation at the "wrong characterization of his political position," but now everybody can see that the question whether this list belonged to Comrade Martov and Comrade Deutsch could have had no political significance whatever, and that *essentially, apart from this or any other list*, the accusation was not false, but true, and the characterization of his political position was absolutely right.

The upshot of this painful and artificial business of the celebrated false list is as follows.

1) One cannot but join Comrades Gorin and Lyadov in considering that Comrade Martov's attack on Comrade Gusev's honour by crying about the "disgraceful fact of a forgery of a list in the interests of a factional struggle" was an unworthy act

2) With the object of creating a more healthy atmosphere and of sparing Party members the necessity of taking every morbid extravagance seriously, it would perhaps be advisable at the Third Congress to adopt a rule which is contained in the Rules of organization of the German Social-Democratic Labour Party Paragraph 2 of these Rules runs: "No person can belong to the

Party who is guilty of a gross violation of the principles of the Party Program or of dishonourable conduct The question of his further membership in the Party shall be decided by a court of arbitration convened by the Party administration One half of the judges shall be nominated by the person demanding the expulsion, and the other half by the person whose expulsion is demanded, the chairman shall be appointed by the Party administration An appeal from a decision of a court of arbitration may be made to the Control Commission or to the Party Congress " Such a rule might serve as a good weapon against all who frivolously level accusations (or spread rumours) of dishonourable conduct If there were such a rule, all such accusations would be classed once and for all as indecent slanders, unless he who made them had the moral courage to come forward *before the Party* in the role of accuser and to secure a verdict from the competent Party institution

Written in
February-May 1904

Published as a
separate pamphlet
in Geneva in May 1904

NOTES

- ¹ Lenin devoted several months to the writing of *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back (The Crisis in Our Party)*, making a careful study of the minutes and resolutions of the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P., the speeches of each of the delegates, the groupings that took shape at the Congress and of the Central Committee and the Party Council documents

The book evoked fury among the Mensheviks Plekhanov demanded that the Central Committee disavow it, the conciliators on the Central Committee tried to prevent its publication and circulation

The defence of the organizational principles elucidated by Lenin in *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* was taken up by Comrade Stalin in a special article on the subject—"The Proletarian Class and the Proletarian Party"—which appeared in January 1905 (J V Stalin, *Collected Works*, Vol 1, pp 62-73), and in a number of other writings At the same time Comrade Stalin carried out Lenin's organizational principles in practice

One Step Forward, Two Steps Back, though published abroad, had a wide circulation among progressive workers in Russia Copies of the book were found during arrests and house-searches in Moscow, St Petersburg, Riga, Saratov, Tula, Orel, Ufa, Perm, Kostroma, Shchigri, Shavli (Kovno Gubernia) and

elsewhere Lenin included the book in the collection *Twelve Years*, published in 1907 (the date on the title page is 1908), deleting sections J, K, L, M, O, P, making abridgments in other sections and adding a few explanatory notes

The present edition contains the full text of *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* as originally published in 1904 and all the additions made by the author in the 1907 edition.

An appraisal of *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* will be found in the *History of the C P S U (B)*, *Short Course*, Moscow 1950, pp 55-62

Title page

- ² *The New "Iskra"*—reference is to the new, Menshevik *Iskra*. After the Second Congress of the R S D L P the Mensheviks, with the aid of Plekhanov, seized control of the *Iskra*. Beginning with issue No 52 (November 1903), the *Iskra* became a Menshevik organ, it ceased publication in October 1905

p 8

- ³ *"Practical Worker"* (Panin)—pseudonyms of M S Makadzub, a Menshevik

p 13

- ⁴ *Iskra (The Spark)*—the first all-Russian illegal Marxist newspaper, founded by Lenin in 1900. The foundation of this militant organ of the revolutionary Marxists was "the main link and the main task in the chain of links and in the chain of tasks then confronting the Party" (Stalin)

The publication of a revolutionary newspaper in Russia was impossible owing to police persecution. While still in exile in Siberia Lenin worked out all the details of a plan to publish the paper abroad and proceeded to carry out this plan as soon as his term of exile ended in January 1900.

The first issue of Lenin's *Iskra* appeared on December 11 (24), 1900, in Leipzig, after which it was

published in Munich, London (from April 1902), and, beginning with the spring of 1903, in Geneva.

The editorial board of the *Iskra* was made up of V I Lenin, G V Plekhanov, Y O Martov, P B Axelrod, A. N Potresov and V. I. Zasulich. N. K. Krupskaya became secretary of the editorial board in the spring of 1901. Lenin was the factual editor-in-chief and leader of all *Iskra's* activities. His articles in the *Iskra* dealt with all the fundamental problems of building the Party and the class struggle of the proletariat in Russia as well as with outstanding events on the international scene.

Groups and committees of the RSDLP supporting the Lenin-*Iskra* line were organized in many cities of Russia, including St. Petersburg and Moscow. In the Caucasus the ideas propagated by the *Iskra* were upheld by *Brdzola (The Struggle)*, the first illegal newspaper in the Georgian language, published by the Tiflis Social-Democratic organization, by its Lenin-*Iskra* group. The founder and leader of the Lenin-*Iskra* organizations in the Caucasus was J. V. Stalin, together with V. Z. Ketskovel, A. G. Tsulukidze and V. K. Kurnatovsky.

Iskra organizations were founded by and worked under the direct guidance of professional revolutionaries trained by Lenin and Stalin (N. E. Bauman, I. V. Babushkin, S. I. Gusev, M. I. Kalinin and others).

On Lenin's initiative, and with his immediate participation, the *Iskra* editorial board drew up a draft program of the Party (published in issue No. 21), and prepared the Second Congress of the RSDLP, which was held in July-August 1903.

By that time most of the Social-Democratic organizations in Russia had associated themselves with the *Iskra*, approved its tactics, program and organizational plan, and recognized it as their leading organ. In a

special resolution the Second Congress recorded the exceptional role of the paper in the struggle to create the Party and adopted *Iskra* as the Central Organ of the RSDLP.

The Second Congress appointed an editorial board consisting of Lenin, Plekhanov and Martov. Contrary to the Congress decision, Martov refused to serve on the board, and issues 46-51 of the *Iskra* were edited by Lenin and Plekhanov. Subsequently, Plekhanov took his stand with the Mensheviks and demanded that all the former Menshevik editors, who had been rejected by the Congress, be included in the editorial board. Lenin could not agree to this, and on November 1, 1903 resigned from the editorial board in order to entrench himself in the Central Committee of the Party and to strike at the Menshevik opportunists from this position. Issue 52 of the *Iskra* was edited by Plekhanov alone. On November 26, 1903, acting on his own accord, and in defiance of the will of the Congress, Plekhanov co-opted the former Menshevik editors to the editorial board. Beginning with the 52nd issue of *Iskra*, the Mensheviks converted it into their organ.

"Ever since then Lenin's Bolshevik *Iskra* has been known in the Party as the *old Iskra*, and the Menshevik, opportunist *Iskra* as the *new Iskra*"
(*History of the CPSU [B]*, *Short Course*, Moscow 1950, p. 54) p. 14

- ⁵ *Conference of 1902*—conference of representatives of RSDLP committees, held in Byelostok on March 23-28 (April 5-10), 1902. The Economists and Bundists intended to proclaim the conference a party congress. Lenin drew up a report, read at the conference by a representative of the *Iskra*, which proved that the conference lacked proper preparation and authority to do so. The conference formed an Organization Committee to convene the Second Congress of the

RSDLP, but most of its members were arrested soon after. A new Organization Committee to convene the Second Congress of the RSDLP was formed in November 1902 at a conference in Pskov. Lenin gives an appraisal of the Byelostok conference in his "Report of the *Iskra* Editorial Board to the Conference of RSDLP Committees" (*Collected Works*, Fourth Russian edition, Vol 6, pp 79-88) p 14

- ⁶ *Bund*—the General Jewish Workers' Union of Lithuania, Poland and Russia. Founded in 1897, it embraced mainly the Jewish artisans in the western regions of Russia. The Bund joined the RSDLP at the latter's First Congress in March 1898. At the Second RSDLP Congress the Bund delegates insisted on their organization being recognized as the sole representative of the Jewish proletariat. The Congress rejected its organizational nationalism, whereupon the Bund withdrew from the Party.

In 1906, following the Fourth ("Unity") Congress, the Bund re-affiliated to the RSDLP. The Bundists constantly supported the Mensheviks and waged an unceasing struggle against the Bolsheviks. Despite its formal affiliation to the RSDLP, the Bund was an organization of a bourgeois nationalist character.

p 18

- ⁷ *Rabocheye Dyelo (The Workers' Cause)*—a magazine published by the Economists at irregular intervals from April 1899 to February 1902 in Geneva. Organ of the Union of Russian Social-Democrats Abroad, edited by B. N. Krichevsky, A. S. Martynov and V. P. Ivashin. Altogether 12 issues (of which three were double issues) appeared.

A criticism of the views held by the *Rabocheye Dyelo*-ists is given by Lenin in *What Is To Be Done?*

p 18

- ⁸ *League*—reference is to the League of Russian Revolutionary Social-Democrats Abroad, founded in October 1901 on Lenin's initiative. Affiliated to the League were the foreign section of the *Iskra* and *Zarya* organization and the *Sotsial-Demokrat* organization (which included the Emancipation of Labour group) The League was the representative of the *Iskra* abroad. It published several issues of its *Bulletin* and a number of pamphlets, including one by V I Lenin, *To the Village Poor*. The Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P. endorsed the League as the sole party organization abroad with the status of a Party committee. Following the Second Congress, the Mensheviks entrenched themselves in the League and from this position waged a struggle against Lenin and the Bolsheviks p. 18
- ⁹ *The Borba group*—a group of writers residing abroad, considered itself part of the R.S.D.L.P. Formed as an independent group in 1901 in Paris. Because it departed from Social-Democratic views and tactics, engaged in disorganizing activities and had no contacts with Social-Democratic organizations in Russia, the group was not allowed representation at the Second Congress of the Party. It was dissolved by decision of that Congress p. 28
- ¹⁰ *Pavlovich*, "A Letter to the Comrades on the Second Congress of the R.S.D.L.P.," Geneva 1904 p. 29
- ¹¹ *Sorokin*—pseudonym of the Bolshevik N. E. Bauman, *Lange*—pseudonym of the Bolshevik A. M. Stopani p. 29
- ¹² *Rabochaya Mysl* (*Workers' Thought*)—a group of Economists which published a paper under this name. It appeared from October 1897 to December 1902. Alto-

gether 16 issues were published. The paper was edited by K. M. Takhtaryov and others.

A criticism of the views expounded by the *Rabochaya Mysl* group, as the Russian variety of international opportunism, is given by Lenin in his *Iskra* articles and in his book *What Is To Be Done?* p. 42

- ¹³ *Historical injustice*—this refers to the demand formulated in the agrarian program that was adopted at the Second Congress of the RSDLP for the restoration to the peasants of the *otrezki*. (literally, "cuts"), i.e., the better portions of the land that were cut off from the peasant holdings by the landlords at the time of the peasant reform in 1861 p. 58

- ¹⁴ *In its third issue*—reference is to No. 3 of the *Iskra*, which carried Lenin's article "The Working-Class Party and the Peasantry" p. 60

- ¹⁵ *Kostrov*—pseudonym of the Georgian Menshevik N. N. Jordania p. 66

- ¹⁶ See the CPSU(B) in *Resolutions and Decisions of Its Congresses, Conferences and Central Committee Plenums*, Part I, 1940, p. 23 p. 67

- ¹⁷ *Manilovism*—smug complacency, inactivity, futile day-dreaming, from Manilov, a character in Gogol's *Dead Souls* p. 102

- ¹⁸ Reference is to an incident which arose in Hamburg in 1900 in connection with the conduct of a group of members of the Stonemasons Union who continued to perform piece work during a strike, in violation of the instructions of the trade union centre. The Hamburg Stonemasons Union complained to the local party organization about the scab activities of these Social-

Democrats A Party court of arbitration, appointed by the Central Committee of the German Social-Democratic Party, condemned the conduct of the Social-Democrat members of the Stonemasons Union but turned down the proposal that they be expelled from the Party p 108

¹⁹ There were 16 members of the Iskra organization at the Second Congress of the RSDLP—nine supporters of the majority headed by Lenin, and seven supporters of the minority headed by Martov p 134

²⁰ *Sablina*—pseudonym of N K Krupskaya p 139

²¹ *Hertz*—pseudonym of D I Ulyanov p 150

²² *A A Arakcheyev*—a reactionary statesman of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth centuries who greatly influenced domestic and foreign policy during the reigns of Paul I and Alexander I His name is associated with a long period of unbridled police tyranny and arbitrary rule by the militarists p 157

²³ *Ossipov*—pseudonym of Rosalia Zemlyachka, a Bolshevik and member of the Central Committee of the RSDLP p 218

²⁴ "*Osvobozhdeniye*" (*Liberation*)—a fortnightly journal of the liberal-monarchist bourgeoisie, published abroad in 1902-05 under the editorship of P B Struve The followers of *Osvobozhdeniye* later made up the core of the Cadet Party, the principal bourgeois party in Russia. p 218

²⁵ *Proletariat in the genitive case*—Lenin is referring to the speech of Akimov, an Economist, at the Second Congress of the RSDLP One of the arguments Akimov advanced against the Party program submitted

by the *Iskra* was that the word "proletariat" appears in the program not as the subject, but as the object

p 224

- ²⁶ *The Mountain and the Gironde*—the names of two political groupings of the bourgeoisie in the period of the French bourgeois revolution at the close of the eighteenth century. The Montagnards, or the Jacobins, was the name given to the more resolute representatives of the bourgeoisie, the revolutionary class of the time. The Jacobins advocated the destruction of absolutism and feudalism. The Girondists, as distinct from the Jacobins, vacillated between revolution and counterrevolution, their policy was one of deals with the monarchy.

Lenin applies the term "Socialist Gironde" to the opportunist trend in the Social-Democratic movement, and the term proletarian Jacobins, or the Mountain, to the revolutionary Social-Democrats

p 240

- ²⁷ *The Voronezh Committee* and the *St. Petersburg "Workers' Organization"* were in the hands of the Economists and were hostile to Lenin's *Iskra* and its organizational plan for building a Marxist party

p 242

- ²⁸ *This member of the C. C.*—reference is to F. V. Lengnik

p 256

- ²⁹ *Zarya*—a Marxist journal of politics published in Stuttgart by the editors of *Iskra* in 1901-02. Four issues appeared.

The following articles by V. I. Lenin appeared in the *Zarya*: "Casual Notes," "The Persecutors of the Zemstvo and the Hannibals of Liberalism," the first four chapters of "The Agrarian Question and the 'Critics of Marx'" (the *Zarya* title was "Messrs. the 'Critics' on the Agrarian Question"), "Review of Internal Affairs," "The Agrarian Program of Russian Social-De-

- mocracy." The *Zarya* also published theoretical articles by Plekhanov. p 256
- ³⁰ *Sobakevich*—a personage in Gogol's *Dead Souls*, p 285
- ³¹ *Orthodox*—the pseudonym of Lyubov Axelrod, a Menshevik p 286
- ³² *Bazarov*—the main character in Turgenev's novel *Fathers and Sons* p 290
- ³³ *Iskra*, No 53 (November 25, 1903), published simultaneously with Lenin's *Letter to the Editorial Board of the "Iskra"* (see *Collected Works*, 4th Russ ed, Vol 7, pp. 98-101), the reply of the editorial board written by Plekhanov. In his letter Lenin proposed to discuss in the columns of the *Iskra* the differences of principle between the Bolsheviks and the Mensheviks Plekhanov rejected the proposal, describing the differences as "circle squabbling" p 291
- ³⁴ *Revolutionnaya Rossiya (Revolutionary Russia)*—a newspaper published by the Socialist-Revolutionaries from the close of 1900 to 1905 From January 1902 it was the central organ of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party p 291
- ³⁵ Y—pseudonym of L. E. Halperin, a conciliator, member of the Central Committee p 295
- ³⁶ Reference is to the views of P. B. Struve, spokesman of "legal Marxism," against whom Lenin came out in the autumn of 1894 with a report entitled "Reflection of Marxism in Bourgeois Literature" p 303
- ³⁷ Lenin is referring to Martov's article in the *Iskra* "Is This the Way To Prepare?" in which Martov opposes preparations for an all-Russian armed insurrection, regarding them as a utopia and conspiracy p. 307

³⁸ *The Dresden Congress of the German Social-Democratic Party* was held on September 13-20, 1903. It condemned the revisionists Bernstein, Braun, Göhre, David and others, but did not expel them from the party, and they continued to advocate their opportunist views unhindered. p. 330

³⁹ *Dyedov*—pseudonym of Lydia Knipovich, a supporter of the Second Congress majority. p. 365

